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First edition (one vol., demy 8vo.), Oct., 1889.

Second edition (one vol., demy 8vo.), Dec., 1889.

Third edition, revised, with notes, errata, and appendix (one vol., demy 8vo.), Feb., 1890.

Fourth edition, revised (one vol., post 8vo.), Feb., 1891.

THE BIBLE AND MODERN DISCOVERIES

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

HENRY A. HARPER

AUTHOR OF

ILLUSTRATED LETTERS TO MY CHILDREN FROM THE HOLY LAND,' 'WALKS IN PALESTINE,' 'GOSHEN TO SINAI,' ETC., ETC., ETC.,

And Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund

FOURTH EDITION

Revised, with Notes, Errata, and Appendix

LONDON

PRINTED FOR THE

COMMITTEE OF THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND

BY

ALEXANDER P. WATT, 2, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1891

'So to delineate the outward events of the Old and New Testament as that they should come home with a new power to those who by long familiarity have almost ceased to regard them as historical truth at all; so to bring out their inward spirit that the more complete realization of their outward form should not degrade, but exalt, the faith of which they are the vehicle—this would indeed be an object worthy of all the labour which travellers and theologians have ever bestowed on the East.'—DEAN STANLEY: *Sinai and Palestine*, Introduction, p. xxvii.

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INTRODUCTION

During the whole of my long occupation of the Secretary's chair in the office of the Palestine Exploration Fund, it was a continual cause of trouble and reproach to us that we had produced no book connecting in a popular and vivid manner the work which had been done by the Society with the Bible narrative. Sir Charles Warren's 'Recovery of Jerusalem,' for instance, admirable as a record of discovery, could not pretend to afford the material for a complete reconstruction of the Herodian city, a thing which must still be postponed until further research has yielded the exact course of the walls, the exact lie of the rock, and the site of the Royal Sepulchres and that of the Temple. Major Conder's books, 'Tent Work in Palestine' and 'Heth and Moab,' deservedly popular as they are, must be considered as books of travel in the first instance, only showing here and there what riches of Biblical illustration can be got from the survey of the country by one who knows how to use the materials. Again, my own little books, 'Our Work in Palestine' and 'Twenty-one Years' Work in Palestine,' were intended as a very brief record of research accomplished, and could not do more than touch upon Biblical illustration, though that, and that alone, was the motive, and the reason, and the object of all the Society's work.

Many subscribers to the Society constantly, and year after year, urged upon me the desirability of pointing out every quarter, in the Journal of the Society, the Biblical bearing of

the researches and the discoveries. This I could not do, nor was it possible for anyone to do, and for many reasons. First of all there are many lines followed out which lead to nothing, as when days and weeks are spent in searching for the Second Wall, and nothing is found except—say—an old Crusading church; or when pages and pages of the Journal have to be occupied with the details connected with a Byzantine pavement, which may be—or may not be—that constructed by Constantine round his Basilica of the Anastasis; or, again, when a new group of tombs has been discovered, and must be sketched, planned, and described at length; or when a building has been found which may prove on examination by architects, or may not prove, to have been a synagogue; or when among the ruins on a hilltop pillars and capitals, which may prove architecturally and historically important, are found; or when among the heaps of broken pottery over some old site there are picked up pieces which, by their form and ornamentation, may connect the place definitely with history. Who is to say, as the record goes on from day to day, what bearing this or that discovery may prove to have upon the Bible.

It must be remembered that the Bible is a collection of books covering a very long period of time; but that, though many of the ruined sites in the Holy Land are undoubtedly of extreme antiquity—even dating from before the conquest by Joshua—it is rare indeed to find anything can be clearly pronounced to be older than the time of Herod. Therefore, when such a discovery is actually made, it becomes of the greatest possible importance—witness the Moabite Stone and the Phœnician inscription at the Pool of Siloam and the masons' marks on the foundation-stones of the Temple. Such discoveries illustrate the Old Testament history in a way which at once strikes the most ignorant reader. But they are rare indeed. On the other hand, researches which seem as they

go on to produce little indeed that can be directly connected with the Bible may be really revealing to us little by little the whole ancient life of the country, and giving back to us the long-vanished past. Thus, it is only by a scientific and exact survey of the whole country that the old topography can be recovered. Conder alone has rescued from oblivion more ancient sites than all other travellers put together. It is by carefully and patiently observing and noting the manners and customs of the most conservative people in the world that those of their ancestors may be learned and illustrated. The legends, language, traditions, songs and stories of the modern Syrians, furnish a continual commentary on the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. The study of the fauna, the flora, the geology throws light on many obscure points; the architecture and arts of the past connect ancient Syria with the countries about it. Indeed, one of the most valuable results of research is the modern discovery—it is nothing less—of the fact that Syria and its occupants were at no time isolated, but were always in relations more or less intimate with the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Hittites, and all other nations around them. Little by little—here and there by aid of an unexpected flash of light—we are recovering ancient Syria. As the past gives up its secrets they may be placed in columns parallel with those of the Old Testament, and, lo! they are found to fit exactly. One thing, however, is as yet wanting. We have never yet found an ancient Israelite library. On the site of Ur of the Chaldees, for instance, we have found all the records of the past clearly written, to be read by any who have the skill. There are the sacred hymns, the songs of the people, their leases and contracts, their laws, their tariffs, everything to show the daily life of the city. In Syria this discovery remains to be made. Somewhere—in the vaults beneath the Temple which have never yet been explored;

under some Tell, one of the mysterious mounds in the South Country, perhaps, there lie stored up for future ages, if the present age does not discover them, the ancient Books of the Hebrew people written in the Phœnician character—the Books of the Things Left Out—those Books which shall supplement the Chronicles and bridge over the time between the fall of the kingdom and the rising of Judas Maccabæus.

When the Memoirs of the Survey were published, the few people—only five hundred in all—who could get that great work saw for themselves how great was the mass of material collected by the indefatigable hand of Claude Conder, whose name will never be forgotten as the Surveyor of the Holy Land. Then the cry for some such popular connection of the Memoirs with the Bible became louder and more persistent. Here a new difficulty arose. The man who could write such a popular book must possess certain necessary qualifications. He must have travelled in Palestine—not, that is, gone on a tour, but actually travelled in the old sense, which did not mean lying down in one place at night and going on again in the morning. This qualification excluded all but a very few. Next, he must possess an intimate knowledge of the Book to be illustrated. Now, it is quite certain that those who really know the Bible are very few indeed. I have had exceptional opportunities of proving the amount of such knowledge possessed by the average man or woman, and I boldly assert that anything approaching to a real knowledge of the Bible is rare indeed, even among those who every day teach from it. One, for instance, a serious and deeply religious lady, who may stand for many, confessed to me once that though she read in the Bible every day she only read the Epistles of St. Paul. Portions of the Bible are read and studied constantly, and the rest is neglected. Also, with the decay of the Puritanic spirit has decayed to a great

extent the old fashion of looking to the Old Testament history for examples of conduct and lessons in faith. Unless I very much mistake the signs of the times, the last twenty years have seen a great decline, chiefly due to this cause, in the study of the Old Testament both in its historical and its prophetic Books. On the other hand, the Bible is now read and studied by many who formerly never thought of consulting it, and with objects not dreamed of in those days. It is now known to be an invaluable help in the study of the past; the student of Egyptian and Assyrian history would be lost without it. The ancient books are full of Ethnological history. The science of religion is found, in a new sense, to be based upon the Bible. The history of ancient civilization is inextricably connected with the historical portions of the Bible. And, again, those who love to consider the doubts and perplexities of humanity and to reflect on the conduct of life, are never tired of reading those portions of the Old Testament which contain the Doubtings of the Man of Uz, the Hymns of King David, the Proverbs of his son, the words of Koholeth the Preacher, and the most impassioned of all Love Songs. But with the light of modern discovery the historical portions will now be read with an entirely new interest. If we no longer take Sisera and his fall as a lesson designed for every man in all ages, we may, and shall, still read the story with reference to the map, and study the campaign literally and exactly as if it were Wellington's campaign in the Peninsula. There are, however, many left who will continue to find such lessons in the history; these will be greatly helped in taking the lessons home to themselves by the new reality which can be thrown upon the narrative.

The third qualification necessary for one who should add a new commentary capable of being read and understood by all, is the power of writing popularly and vividly.

All three qualifications appeared to the Committee to be possessed by the author of the following pages. Mr. Henry A. Harper has been a traveller, not a tourist; not once, but twice, his feet have lingered over these holy fields. He is an artist who has painted the lands of Palestine, Sinai, and Egypt; he has a profound knowledge of the Bible and a deep love for every portion of it; his reading is not limited to St. Paul on the one hand nor to the Book of Job on the other. He knows every part of the Bible. He has been for a great many years an active member of the Committee of this Society. And, finally, he has shown in his 'Letters to my Children from the Holy Land' how well he can illustrate with pen and pencil the scenes of the Bible.

In this new work, therefore, the author has attempted a thing hitherto untried. He has taken the sacred history as related in the Bible step by step, and has retold it with explanations and illustrations drawn from modern research and from personal observation. He has, in short, written a book which we hope will prove that long-desired popular connection of scientific exploration with the subject which exploration was intended to illustrate.

It is, I hope, needless to point out that Mr. Harper in this volume speaks for himself, and not for the Committee. If, therefore, there be any who should differ from him in conclusions or opinions, in points of topography or points of doctrine, they will be so good as to remember that they differ from the author, and not from the Committee of which he is a member.

WALTER BESANT,
Hon. Sec.

Palestine Exploration Fund,
1, Adam Street, Adelphi,
Oct. 4th, 1889.

PREFACE TO FOURTH EDITION

The three Library Editions of this work being exhausted, the Committee of the Palestine Fund have determined to publish the book in a cheaper form. The whole book has been again revised; a few illustrations are left out, but many new notes added.

The Author begs to thank his many correspondents who have written to him in such kindly terms. All corrections suggested he has endeavoured to carry out.

H. A. H.

PREFACE

At the request of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund the writer has attempted to compile a simple account of the valuable discoveries made by the officers of the Fund in Palestine, as well as some of the equally valuable discoveries made by the Egyptian Exploration Fund, the two American Expeditions, and the latest travellers.

The critic is warned that the writer does not pretend to literary skill—the arduous life of a landscape-painter has given him little time to cultivate the sister art of literature. He has endeavoured to write a simple book, for simple folk who love their Bible. To these he trusts this work will be of use.

The warmest thanks of the writer are due to the Chairman and the gentlemen of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund for the use of their published works and their unstinted assistance in every way; to the able Assistant Secretary, Mr. George Armstrong, who is intimately acquainted with every inch of the land of Palestine, the writer's very best thanks are due—in short, without Mr. Armstrong's assistance in correcting the Arabic names, and other valuable suggestions, the writer could not have completed this work.

To Walter Besant, Esq., the Hon. Secretary of the Fund, the writer is most deeply indebted for kind encouragement, for valuable suggestion, for help ever cheerfully given, and now, not least, for his valuable Introduction.

Biblical critics will doubtless discover mistakes—in so large a subject and on which so many opinions exist, the writer cannot hope that he has escaped error; but if any mistakes are pointed out, he will gladly profit by the corrections in future editions of this work.

The list of principal works consulted closes the book: but as for many years the writer has studied the works of most Bible students, it would be impossible to name his indebtedness. In short, the merits of the book belong to others, its faults and failings to

H. A. H.

Cliff House, Milford-on-Sea, Hants.

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The Bible and Modern Discoveries.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE DEATH OF JOSEPH.

THE Bible is the Word of God—the Sword of the Spirit. At the same time it is permitted to man, by the exercise of the faculties given him by his Creator, to explain, by research, patient investigation, and travel, passages which otherwise might be dark, with every sympathy for 'honest doubt.' Yet this book is written for those who love the Bible; who see in it God graciously revealing Himself to man; who find in it His gracious plan of Redemption, and find also in it God's Magna Charta for the poor, which, if acted up to, would prevent any and all of the wrongs they often suffer. If, too, this Word of God were only read, studied, and acted up to, all those terrible divisions of Christianity which so scandalize the world would disappear.

To rightly understand the Word, we must first remember that it is an Eastern book, written in Eastern lands—full of Eastern thought, all customs spoken of Eastern; hence the necessity for investigation in those lands, by the spade and pick, by study of monuments, language, customs, by close examination of the ground, in order that the full meaning of its pages may be understood. Some may say that Biblical discoveries are but the dry bones of religion; but the prophet of old, when moved by the Spirit of God, found that the breath of the Spirit could wake even the dry bones into life, and that they stood upon their feet a great army clothed with flesh and vigorous with life.

A very dear friend of my own—a splendid explorer, a great traveller—was at heart, in secret, an unbeliever in the sovereignty of God. Circumstances compelled him to explore Palestine. To understand the country he found he must read the Book; and reading it in the full blaze of light which custom and country threw on it, he found that Jesus was indeed his Saviour. He brought the full power of his able mind to bear on all he saw, on all he read; and in humble, grateful adoration he bowed before his God and Redeemer. He rests in the little Protestant cemetery on Mount Zion. Though dying at an early age, he was yet full of joy, thankful that he had been brought to that land, the study of which had removed all his doubts and had placed his feet upon the rock. There had been no sudden, violent change; all had been noiselessly accomplished: it had descended out of heaven from God.

We may say, in one respect, that the minds of all great men resemble the revealed mind of the Great Creator; that is, in patience. Look at all great lives: the settled purpose; the steady holding to it. Abram is a fair type of all those men whose work God honours. They take Him at His word.

The world may say they 'venture'; that they are 'enthusiasts'; but He blesses their faith and their work. Let us look at the lessons of Abram's life.

In Gen. xi. 31 we first find his name: he is living with his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in 'Ur of the Chaldees.' His father leaves Ur, and, accompanied by all his family, goes to Haran. True, we know St. Stephen says, in the Acts of the Apostles vii. 2, that God had appeared to Abram 'before he dwelt in Haran,' and had told him to go out of the land of the Chaldæans; but the outward sign of this was that he accompanied his father Terah. '"Ur of the Chaldees" has been found, the ruins of its temples excavated; some of its engraved gems may be seen in the British Museum. The place is now called Mugheir, on the western side of the Euphrates, on the border of the desert west of Erech'*—low down near the Persian Gulf, and not the 'Ur' of most Biblical maps, near Haran. The name 'Ur' is Semitic for Accadian *eri*, 'city.' The worship of 'Ur' was that of the Moon-god. We may note here that Abram's original name is found on an early Babylonian contract tablet, written Abu-ramu, or Abram, 'the exalted father.' Sarah is the Assyrian *sarrat*, 'queen.' Milcah, the daughter of Haran, is the *milcat*, 'princess.' The Accadian inscriptions of which I speak are as yet the oldest in the world. Until these inscriptions were found and read, scholars placed both Ur and Haran in wrong localities. Haran, the place to which Terah emigrated, was the frontier town of Babylonia, commanding both the roads and the fords of the Euphrates. The word Haran means 'road.'

This road was well known; for Sargon I. of Accad had swept along it on his great expedition to the West. He has left his image on the rocks of the Mediterranean coast, and he

* Prof. Sayce, 'Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments,' 1888, pp. 44, 45.

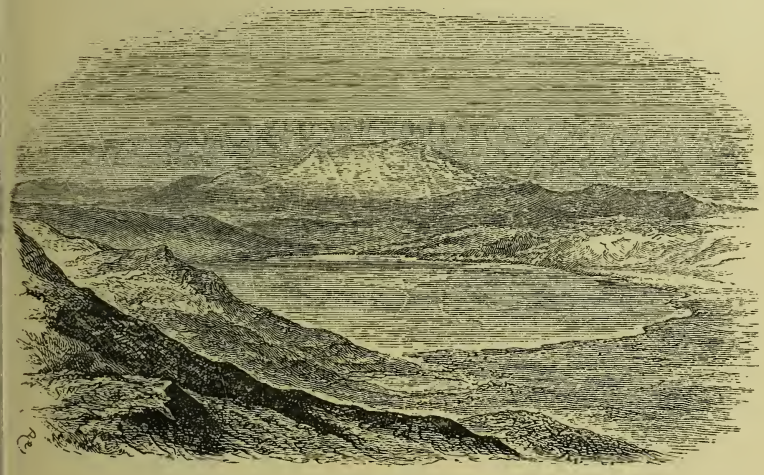
even crossed the sea to Cyprus. Abram here would be brought into contact with Semitic traders, as it was the great caravan road to Damascus and Egypt. In his early days he would be well accustomed to business. Do we not see his business habits coming out later in his transactions with the children of Heth (Gen. xxiii. 16), when his possession of the field was '*made sure*' (verse 17)? We have in the British Museum seals of jasper, cornelian, and other hard stones, dating before his time. These seals were for stamping deeds. At Haran, Abram may have seen the armies of Chedorlaomer as they passed on their way to their distant conquests—armies which thirteen years later he was to engage in conflict and defeat.

And now Terah dies, and the direct call comes—to leave his 'father's house . . . unto a land I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and bless thee . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed' (Gen. xii. 1-3). Obedient to the call, he goes, taking with him Lot and all his family, 'not having,' as St. Stephen says, 'so much as to set his foot on' (Acts vii. 5) of the land.

He is no Jew, remember. He is Abram, 'the Hebrew'; that is, 'the man who has crossed' the river Euphrates. Let us see if we can trace his route. Probably, as Dean Stanley thought, he crossed the Euphrates at Bîr; then a fertile track would lead him straight on. He must take that fertile track, and not the others suggested; for had not he and Lot sheep, 'flocks, and herds, and tents'? (Gen. xii. 4, 5). Thence by Aleppo to Damascus. We may dismiss the various Arab traditions which say he ruled as king in the latter city. And now, crossing the Pharpar, he must needs ascend the hills of Bashan, leaving on his left hand 'Argob,' now called El Lejjah, that stony, barren region; from the heights he would see Lebanon, and Hermon, known then under its name of Shenir, the 'Shining'; and from some height hereabout would get his

first view of the promised land: he would see Gennesareth and all the land of Galilee—places so full of Him who said, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and He *saw* it.' Dean Stanley remarks of the views from hereabouts: 'the finest he had ever seen in this part of the world.'*

This is still the caravan route: thence onwards, crossing the Jabbok, now called the Zerka, he might cross at the fords of Damieh, just below the junction of Zerka and Jordan; thence by the easy road of Wâdy Far'ah to Shechem



GENNESARETH.

He is now in the 'land of Canaan' (Gen. xii. 5), which word means 'lowlands'; it originally meant only the coast, but in time the word was used to express the whole of Palestine. At Shechem the promises of God were renewed (Gen. xii. 7); and over the uplands he goes to Bethel; again builds an altar, and journeys 'towards the south' (ver. 9). Now, the south, called in Hebrew 'Negeb,' was the southern

* 'Sinai and Palestine.'

limit of what afterwards became the land of Judah, held at this time by the Philistines—a land subject to periodic droughts, and hence famine. Why, even in 1870, owing to a drought, the Philistine country was almost depopulated, the inhabitants having gone to Egypt for food. The pastures of those Bethel hills would soon be exhausted and not fit for winter quarters, exposed as all the country there is to cold winds, snow and hail. In 1875 the cold there was most trying, and hence I imagine why Abram went south, as there he would find better winter quarters. But the patriarch, who had seen the civilization of Babylonia, was now to come face to face with the culture of Egypt. He does not intend to stay permanently, but to 'sojourn there' (ver. 10). He must have gone in the cool season, for then the short desert can be crossed; and from the south he would go by the central road, known in the Bible by the description of 'the way of Shur.' The Hebrew word used means a 'road,' 'a beaten track'; it is often translated 'the king's highway.' Traces of this road were found in 1878 by the Rev. F. W. Holland, on his fifth visit to Sinai Desert.* The road is really a continuation of the caravan route from Hebron and Beersheba. He found wells and ancient ruins, large numbers of flint flakes and arrow-heads.

Here I must digress for a moment. The word 'Shur' is said, by competent scholars, to mean 'wall.' There is plenty of proof that the ancient Egyptian kings built a 'wall' to keep out the incursions of the Bedawîn. If this is right, then the passage in Gen. xxv. 18 has this meaning: 'The wall that is before Egypt as thou goest toward Assyria.'† The earliest discovered mention of this wall‡ is in an ancient papyrus, of

* Palestine Fund Quarterly Statement, January, 1884, pp. 5-13.

† 'Kadesh Barnea,' Trumbull, pp. 44-58.

‡ That there was a 'wall' of defence on the borders of Egypt and Philistia is, I think, proved by Egyptian papyri. The extent or limits of *that* wall is a very open question.

the twelfth dynasty, now in the Berlin Museum. It was closely guarded: there were 'watchers upon the wall in daily rotation.' Papyrus and inscriptions show us the Egyptian officers writing down the names of any who sought to pass the wall into Egypt; so strict were their instructions that the names and numbers of the strangers are reported to the king. A papyrus, now in the British Museum, known as 'The Two Brothers,' shows us the state of affairs; it tells of a Pharaoh who sent two armies to take a fair woman from her husband, and then to murder him. Another papyrus, in Berlin, records how the wife and children of a foreigner were taken from him by a Pharaoh.

These extracts will show us why it was that Abram was in such fear on entering into Egypt, and why he wished Sarai to conceal the truth. It happened as he foresaw, and 'the princes of Pharaoh saw her, and praised her to Pharaoh' (Gen. xii. 14, 15). But how was it that Abram had no need of an interpreter? And how was it that these Egyptians 'beheld the woman that she was very fair'? (Gen. xii. 14).

'Abram entered Egypt during the reign of the Hyksos, or Shepherds.' The Egyptian word is *hik shasu*, 'prince of the Shashu,' or 'Bedawîn.' They were a Semitic race, which had driven out the *native* Egyptian kings, who had taken refuge in Memphis* and Thebes. These shepherds reigned over the fertile Delta; they had adopted Egyptian state, and they spoke a Semitic language, though they copied many Egyptian words; for they called their king Pharaoh, from Egyptian *pir-aa*,† 'great house.' So the palace gave its name to the king; just as we now say 'the Porte,' or gate, when we mean the Turkish Sultan. In short, these Hyksos, the foreigners, had adopted the customs of pure Egyptian culture. Now as to the veil.

* Mariette Bey thinks the Hyksos conquered the country even as far as Memphis.

† Sayce.

After a careful examination of thousands of inscriptions and representations of the daily life of Old Egypt, in the various temples, I cannot recall one in which a woman is represented with a veil. Wilkinson remarks that 'the ancient Egyptians were not as other Orientals, who secluded their women.'* But in the inscriptions we see them in all their feasts and public rejoicings and daily life. We can see all the mysteries of the toilette of an Egyptian beauty. She has her eyebrows painted —'beauty spots' put on—hair dressed in various fashions; but never a veil. If, therefore, Sarai wore one in Haran (which I doubt), she would, in deference to Abram's desire to do nothing to attract much attention, leave it off before entering Egypt. This question of veils will come up again. One thing is clear: she did not wear one.†

All happened, then, as Abram had feared; and 'Pharaoh and his house are plagued with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife' (Gen. xii. 17). She is released. And see how honourably Pharaoh behaves. No revenge: he restores the wife, and 'commanded his men concerning him, and they sent him away, and all that he had' (ver. 20). That king listened to the Voice—to the hand of God. Do not the Apostle's words apply here? 'Of a truth, I perceive God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him' (Acts x. 34, 35).

Though Abram fell, yet there was life in him—ever struggling upwards. Egypt was going downwards. Better to be the crushed blade of grass which, though bent and feeble, yet has *life*, than the polished stone which, though it crushes the blade, is but itself dead. We can only repeat the words of Holy

* 'Ancient Egyptians,' Wilkinson.

† No veils are worn now by the Bedawin women in the 'Negeb,' and in the country round Beersheba.

Writ: 'Abram believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness' (James ii. 23). The patriarch, now with Lot, goes '*up out* of Egypt' (Gen. xiii. 1). This is a true description; for to go to the 'Negeb' would be, indeed, to *ascend* into the hill country. They go back to Bethel. There Abram 'called on the name of the Lord.' Then comes the strife with the herdsmen. Lot chooses the plain which he saw; for he 'beheld the plain of Jordan' (Gen. xiii. 10). A fact of importance, as we shall see hereafter. Abram goes to Mamre—Hebron; and while there comes that great invasion of Chedorlaomer and his confederate kings. The 'kings' or 'sheikhs' of Sodom and the plain had been subject to this mighty monarch, but had rebelled; and now comes that wondrous march. Starting from Elam, below Babylon, he follows the course of the river Euphrates, on the east bank, to Haran—high up north; then crosses the fords, and, turning, taking or passing Kadesh of the Hittites, on to Damascus; through Rephaim, the land of giants, Bashan, Moab; further on crushing the Horites, in Mount Seir; turns west to El Paran, now the station of Nakhl, in the desert, having swept the Gulf of 'Akabah; thence turning to Kadesh, the oasis, he sweeps through the country of the Amalekites and Amorites; to Hazezontamar, the Engedi, and thence through the passes. So, having cleared his flanks, he goes through to the vale of Siddim. The kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the kings of the vale, oppose him; he defeats their array—some fly to the mountains, some fall in the 'slime' or bitumen pits—while he carries Lot and all the accumulated plunder away.

This vale of Siddim seems ever to have been full of slime-pits. The Egyptians got the bitumen with which they embalmed their dead from here; and even to this day 'pits' exist. Dr. Merrill, of the American Survey, counted in one place a row of thirty-one, and in another row twenty; they are from

three to six feet deep, and he says more can be traced.* The Arabs have an old tradition that they were dug for military purposes, and relate how a king once fell into them, and that a powerful *Jewish prince* rescued him. This, to say the least, is curious. Pits or 'ditches' are mentioned as having been dug when Jehoshaphat warred against Moab (2 Kings iii. 16).

Dr. Merrill adds: 'I took special pains to see if there were any marks of water having been conveyed from one to another, but could discover no such traces. In this series there are thirty-one pits in the longest line, and twenty in the other. The line probably extended somewhat farther towards the Jordan, but the pits in that direction have been obliterated in some way. Indications of their use might be developed if cuttings could be made in them; but the heat was great, and I could not ask our men to dig in the baked earth under a sun that raised the mercury to 120° or more.'

On page 227 Dr. Merrill remarks, 'What the "slime pits" of Gen. xiv. 10 were I do not understand.'

Dr. Chaplin, so long resident in Jerusalem, writes me: 'My Bedâwy guide, an Adwân, told me they were called "the pits, or hiding-places of Zair," and were intended for the concealment of cavalry, *i.e.*, Bedawîn horsemen, a purpose which they are admirably adapted to serve; the two converging lines north of Nimrin forming, in conjunction with the southern line, a strategical position which I (who am no soldier) should think would be of great importance in the Arab style of warfare.'†

* 'East of the Jordan,' Merrill, p. 225.

† In the Quarterly Statement for January, 1890, will be found an able letter from W. Simpson, Esq. He says these 'pits' appear to resemble some which are found in Persia and Afghanistan, called 'Karaize,' and used for storing water. The Rev. James Neil (Quarterly Statement, April, 1890) describes these 'pits' as he saw them, and adds that this network of water-pits, stretching across the whole vale, naturally completed the rout of

Some who escaped came and told Abram, who, secure in the highlands at Hebron, had not felt the shock of the invader; he armed his 'trained servants' (Gen. xiv. 14), with his allies, Aner and Eshcol, for his heart yearned for Lot, his nephew. Aner and Eshcol would also have their contingents, for the Hebrew text says they were 'lords of a league' with Abraham. All had friends to rescue or avenge. Down the passes they go; soon up the valley, or ghôr, on the track of the invader; and after about four days and nights of swift marching, see his camp—Chedorlaomer's army, spoilt by conquest, hampered with spoils and captives, demoralized by feastings, thinking they had conquered all foes, keeping a loose night watch—as all Eastern armies have ever done, from those days to Tell el Kebîr—subject, too, as all Eastern armies have ever been, to sudden panic. Then came the night-attack in flank and rear—had not Abram 'divided himself against them by night'? (Gen. xiv. 15)—not deficient in strategy; 'turning movements' were known to him. The huge array fell in each other's way; a defeat followed—just like those of Xerxes in after-years; the victor pursues them to Hobah, near Damascus, rescuing Lot, his goods and women—to receive on his return the congratulations of that mysterious personage, Melchizedek.

Here we note the grandeur of Abraham's conduct. He declines to take anything for himself: 'Lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich' (ver. 23). And yet—like every good commander, thoughtful of his men—he says for the young men, the men who went with him, 'Let them take their portion' (ver. 24). The promise to Abram is again renewed; then he

the retreating armies of the five kings. In the May number of the *Theological Monthly* Mr. Neil gives full details as to his discovery, which really solves the question how the 'cities of the plain' were supplied with water.

has 'a deep sleep' and 'an horror of great darkness' (ch. xv. 12): he is told his 'seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs'; that they shall be afflicted four hundred years, and that afterwards they shall come out with great substance; that he shall be buried in peace, and that in the fourth generation they shall come hither again—'for the *iniquity* of the *Amorite is not yet full*' (ch. xv. 16). What a wonderful revelation! for as yet he had *no* son.

In the 18th verse follows the covenant the Lord made with Abram: 'Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.' These words define the borders of the Promised Land, north and south. The question, however, arises, What is 'the river of Egypt'? Here great confusion has crept in through an unhappy translation both in the Authorised Version and the Revised Version. What is called 'river' should be 'brook,' or, better still, 'torrent.' In 2 Kings xxiv. 7 it is called 'the *brook* of Egypt'; in Joshua xv. 4, the Revised Version also translates the word 'brook of Egypt.' The borders of the Promised Land never touched the *Nile*. This 'brook,' or 'torrent' of Egypt is now known as Wâdy el 'Arîsh; few travellers have explored it. Let us quote some. Mr. G. J. Chester,* speaking of his journey from 'San'—the Zoan of the Bible—to the border, says:

'Evening coming on, I again encamped near the seashore, and the next morning arrived at the Wâdy Fiumara, or dry torrent-bed of "El 'Arîsh," so strangely and misleadingly termed in the Authorised Version "the river of Egypt." The town, or rather village, of clay houses, stands between the desert and the sea, at the distance of about a quarter of a mile from the latter. . . . To the west of the entrance of the wâdy, close to the seashore, are the remains of some ancient houses.

* Palestine Fund Quarterly Statement, July, 1880, p. 158.

Occasionally in winter, when heavy rains have fallen amongst the mountains inland, the wâdy of El 'Arîsh is temporarily a turbulent rushing torrent. . . . El 'Arîsh, or rather the wâdy at that place, is the natural boundary of Egypt, and appears as such in many maps'* He notes that on the road he travelled old cisterns and wells abounded, and ruins of old cities.

The late Rev. F. W. Holland left some most interesting notes of a desert journey from Nakhl to Ismailia.† He explored and mapped the true course of Wâdy el 'Arîsh. He found numerous small watercourses leading into this great wâdy. At one watering-place ('El Hathirah') 'there are five bad wells and one good, which is very deep:' near this 'a stream and three or four shallow wells with troughs. Great beds of rushes betoken the presence of water, and we had to pick our way through these on account of small streams.' Many 'flint flakes and broken pottery were found.' He frequently notes 'streams and rushes.' Wâdy el 'Arîsh has been traced from the Mediterranean Sea to Nakhl; it is really more than one hundred miles in length, and so is justly and truthfully called by the sacred historians '*the brook*' or '*torrent*' of Egypt. At its source, near Nakhl, Holland describes it as 'a large barren plain with no trees,' and he further on adds that the Alluvial Plain is so scored by watercourses as to be very bad ground for travelling, and says in wet weather this *upper portion* must be quite impassable.

Professor Palmer‡ shows how two great valleys drain the mountain plateau of the Tîh Desert, and how they 'combine their streams, and then, flowing into Wâdy el 'Arîsh, are carried on to the Mediterranean.'

* The starting-point of the *present* boundary between Egypt and Palestine is about midway between El 'Arîsh and Gaza.—Palestine Fund Quarterly Statement, October, 1886.

† Palestine Fund Quarterly Statement, January, 1884.

‡ 'Desert of the Exodus,' vol. ii., pp. 288, 289.

Dr. Trumbull thus describes the wâdy:* 'The extended watercourse known as Wâdy el 'Arîsh, which runs northwards through the Desert of the Wanderings, dividing it into eastern and western halves, may be said to separate the Desert of the Wanderings on the east from the Desert of Shur on the west.' The name El 'Arîsh means 'boundary' or 'extremity.' Some scholars consider that in 'Nakhl'—the name of the Egyptian fortress in mid-desert—we really have the word 'torrent,' while others derive the word from the Arabic 'Nakhl'—'palm-trees.' 'Egypt proper is bounded definitely enough on the east by a line drawn from El 'Arîsh to 'Akabah.† The wâdy dries up in the hot season, but after rain it is a narrow and rapid stream. The Archduke Ludwig of Austria,‡ in describing this wâdy, says: 'It still brings water down from the hills. It may be crossed either close to the seashore or at a shallower spot not far distant.' He adds that the Alluvial Plain 'is so scored by watercourses as to be very bad ground for travelling.'

Enough has been quoted to show how true was the expression 'brook' or 'torrent' of Egypt, and that it should never be confounded with the Nile. So this, the southern frontier of the Promised Land, is seen to be a well-defined gorge, or wâdy, which reaches from the Great Sea westward to Nakhl, and continues to 'Akabah on the Red Sea. If we look at 2 Chron. ix. 26, we read: 'Solomon ruled over all the kings from the river (*i.e.*, Euphrates) even unto the land of the Philistines and the *border of Egypt*.' The writer there did not confuse the 'brook' with the Nile, as so many Biblical commentators do now.

Listening to the advice of Sarai, Abram now takes Hagar,

* Trumbull, 'Kadesh Barnea,' p. 115.

† McCoan, 'Egypt as it is.'

‡ 'Caravan Route between Egypt and Syria.'

the Egyptian maid, as wife. She, being dealt with harshly by Sarai, fled, and is found by the angel by '*the* fountain in the way to Shur' (Gen. xvi. 7). The only note of the position of this fountain is that 'it is between Kadesh and Bered.' Bered has not been identified, though some maps put the name in without question! Kadesh has been found, and will be spoken of hereafter. The fountain must have been well known, for it is called *the* fountain, and so would be on the middle or 'Shur' road from Palestine to Egypt. Palmer thinks he has identified it with a place now called ''Ain el Muweileh'* Near the junction of Wâdy el 'Ain and Guseimeh there are wells overflowing with water. The hills about are covered with ruins. Other travellers say that it is still called by the Arabs 'the Well of Hagar,' and they point out a rock chamber which they call 'the House of Hagar.' It is about twelve miles west from Kadesh; its Hebrew name, as we know, is Beer-lahai-roi, 'the well of the living one, who seeth me.' 'Ishmael,' her son's name, means 'God heareth.' God, the merciful God, had seen the trials and heard the cry of the poor Egyptian wife. She returned to her home, and bare her son; let us hope Sarai was kind to her. Long years pass; Ishmael is thirteen years old, and the promise of the son by *Sarai* is still unfulfilled. At ninety-and-nine years of age, the Lord God again appears, and gives that wondrous command: 'Walk before Me, and be thou perfect' (Gen. xvii. 1). His name and that of his wife are changed; the name of the promised son is given; he is to be called Isaac, and from him a great nation is to come. And then we have that beautiful Eastern idyl of Abraham sitting in the tent door, in the heat of the day, when three strangers appear. True to all the claims of hospitality, so sacred to the Eastern races, Abram and Sarai find water and prepare food. It is too much the fashion of

* 'The Desert of the Exodus,' Prof. Palmer, vol. ii., p. 354.

writers of the present day to sneer at the hospitality offered now in the East, and say it is because they expect greater gifts in return; that has not been my experience. The Western races might still learn a lesson from the Bedawîn, who, knowing not the law, are yet 'not forgetful to entertain strangers' (Heb. xiii. 2); many a poor gift has warmed my heart when far away. And one felt the 'brotherhood' of man, perhaps, more there than in the crowded city.

And now the time is near at hand for the fulfilment of the long-delayed promise, and Sarai, behind the tent curtain in the women's compartment, had been listening to the conversation with the strangers, and when they named the time of the birth, she laughed (Gen. xviii. 12); and the son, remember, long before was to be named Isaac, that is, 'to laugh' (Gen. xvii. 19). She only followed Abraham's example, for Gen. xvii. 17 shows he 'laughed.' We all know that wondrous story of Abraham pleading for the guilty cities of the plain. Abraham, after all, is left in doubt; *if* there were *ten* righteous men, the cities would be saved (Gen. xviii. 32).

We must now examine the position 'of the cities of the plain,' and see if the commonly accepted notion is true, that the 'Dead Sea' covers their sites. At first let us note that the 'Dead Sea' is not a Biblical term; that sea is always called in the Bible 'the Salt Sea,' or the 'Sea of the Plain,' or the 'East Sea,' to distinguish it from the Mediterranean, which is always spoken of as 'the Great Sea westwards.'

We noted before that Lot, standing on the Bethel hill, '*saw*' 'the Valley of the Jordan.' From *no* hill there, except one called by the Arabs 'the Hill of Stones,' can any view of the Jordan Valley or Dead Sea be seen; and what can there be seen is the *northern* end of the Dead Sea, the Jordan Valley, and the river running like a blue thread through the green plain. The hills of Engedi shut out completely all view of the

southern end of the sea; but, as I before said, the northern end, where the Jordan runs in, and about two or three miles of the sea, can be seen. I have wandered over all the Bethel hills and tested this question. The cities *were* destroyed, but how? 'Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and that which grew upon the ground' (Gen. xix. 24, 25). The whole country then and now is bituminous; the cities were built of the soil of the plain. Like the builders of Babel, 'they had brick for stone, and slime (bitumen) for mortar' (Gen. xi. 3). The 'fire from heaven' was lightning—truly a fire from God! Cities, corn, grass, all took fire, and 'the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace.' How extremely *local* the destruction was we can see in that Zoar, one of the cities of the plain, was not touched, at Lot's intercession. He says he 'cannot escape to the mountain'; the city is 'little,' and '*near*.' Again, when 'the morning arose,' Lot, his wife and children are led out; and 'the sun was *risen* upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar;' so the time of his flight is between *dawn* and *sunrise*. Again, look at Abraham at Mamre, not twenty miles off: he hears nothing, sees nothing, though he is full of anxiety, till, 'early in the morning,' Abraham got up to the place where he stood before the Lord, and he looks toward Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. xix. 27, 28), and sees the smoke. He had heard nothing, felt nothing, before. Had it been, as some say, an earthquake, why, Palestine would have shaken to its centre to make that deep depression. Geology proves—as, in fact, anyone can see—that the deep depression of the valley and the Dead Sea must have existed from prehistoric times, when in long ages past the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea were united through the Wâdy 'Arabah, and the whole plain was an inland sea. But we do not rest on these proofs alone. In Deut.

xxix. 23 it is written: 'And the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath.' Nothing here about a sea covering the sites! And again, Deut. xxxii. 32: 'For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter.'* And St. Peter (2nd Epistle ii. 6), speaking of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by *fire*, remarks, 'turning the cities into ASHES.' One final remark: From Mamre, or Hebron Hills, no view of the Dead Sea can be got—the Engedi hills bar the view; but there is a dip, or gap, which would enable smoke to be seen *if it arose at* the *northern* end of the sea.

Poets may write of

'That bituminous lake where Sodom flamed,'

but many things of Milton have been accepted as Bible truth with as little foundation in fact. And what of the so-called 'apple of Sodom'? Here, again, in the Bible I find it only speaks of the 'vine,' that its clusters are 'bitter'—nothing about a tree or shrub. And none of the proposed 'trees' satisfy me. There is another mention of the 'vine' when the sons of the prophets went into the valley and gathered some 'gourds,' and shred them into the pot, and then found the pottage bitter, and cried, 'O, thou man of God, there is death in the pot!' and the prophet Elisha cured the pottage (2 Kings iv. 39-41). And why hunt for an 'apple,' when there is in the desert, growing on the little hillocks, a 'vine,' much like a melon-vine for foliage, and bearing a fruit the size of a lemon, which is lovely to look at, but death to taste, as all Bedawîn

* Note Zephaniah ii. 9, 'Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation.' See also Jer. xlix. 18.

know; and well I remember their horror when they saw me gather some, thinking I was about to eat them! This fruit has a thick skin, and inside is full of pips, which are *very* bitter. They dry, and are hard enough then to bear all the dangers of travel, for I have some still in my cabinet. Here, again, poets have led the world astray.

There has always been a mountain of rock salt at the south end of the Dead Sea; and there must always have been salt fields and marshes near it. The ruins at the south end are small and insignificant, but at the north end there is a remarkable group of tells—'ruined heaps'; in fact, it is covered with ruins—sites of cities that existed in the days of Joshua. For the north end is fertile; five important sites have been found. Tell-Iktanû, one of these sites, has no meaning in Arabic. Dr. Merrill* suggests it is from the Hebrew word *Katan*, 'little,' or 'little one'; and he is supported by great authorities. The name 'Zoar' in early days was 'Bela' (Gen. xiv. 2). Zoar is mentioned in connection with Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 3), and in Isaiah and Jeremiah. Edrisi—an Arab writer—speaks of small ships plying on the Lower Jordan and the Dead Sea itself.

Again, Abraham goes south between Kadesh and Shur, and he sojourned in Gerar. This place has been identified with 'Umm el Jerrâr.'† The valley is about 200 yards wide. At the time of Major Conder's visit there was a large encampment of the Terabîn Arabs in the valley. He could neither see nor hear of 'wells.' There were many 'cisterns.' No wells nearer than Beersheba—no springs, though they are marked on many maps; but the Arabs, who are numerous, supply themselves with water by digging in the bed of the valley until they come to it. This valley really drains an immense area, as its

* 'East of Jordan,' pp. 235-239.

† Conder, Quarterly Statement, July, 1875, pp. 162-165; January, 1881, p. 38.

head is close to Hebron, thence by Beersheba to the sea, a distance of over 60 miles. No ruins visible; a dozen cisterns, and scattered about are heaps of pottery; but a little south of this is an enormous mound, crescent-shaped, 100 yards in diameter, covered with broken pottery—its present name, Tell-Jemmeh. Later travellers speak of the country as undulating, a chalky soil, covered with grass. Many Arabs and their cattle about. Cultivated plots with barley, melons. In Wâdy Sheri'ah there are many wells. In a circle of two miles, twenty-four wells are marked in the great map issued by the Palestine Fund.

The Philistine King of Gerar, Abimelech, takes Sarai, but, warned by a dream, returns her to Abraham, at the same time reproaching him for his want of truthfulness. And Abimelech claims that his is 'a righteous nation' (Gen. xx. 5). He gives back the wife, with many gifts. Isaac is born. When he is 'weaned' there is a great feast. With us, children are weaned early; not so with Easterns. A 'man child' is often given the breast till the end of his fourth or fifth year—a favourite child sometimes not weaned till its seventh year! It would seem, from all considerations, that Isaac was five years of age when weaned.

This explanation gives point to our Lord's remark, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.'

Ishmael, the son of Hagar, mocks at the feast (Gen. xxi. 9-15); so Abraham, taking 'bread and a bottle of water,' puts it on Hagar's shoulder, and sends her away with her son. She wanders in the wilderness of Beersheba. The water spent, the boy exhausted, she casts him under one of the shrubs—the 'Retem'—little broom bushes which grace the desert, and which every traveller knows are often the only shelter and shade from the burning sun. It has often been my lot, when worn out with fatigue, to seek shelter in this way. I may here remark that Gerar was well known to the Egyptians. Its name

appears in the list of Thothmes III. as 'Kerara.' I do not think there are any grounds for identifying Gerar with Gaza, as is done by some writers. The position of Gaza does not fit in with the Bible narrative, and that, apart from everything else, is a sufficient objection. One reason why all these wells are so difficult to find is the great objection the Bedawîn have to show the oases. That there are more wells in the desert of Shur than are known to travellers I am convinced. Twice in my own wanderings in the desert have I been taken—after giving a solemn promise not to tell—to water. Once it was a lovely spot—a deep, pure pool, with palms growing near, papyrus and other rushes rank and rich—I gathered some of the papyrus, which I still have—grass and flowers. This is not marked in any map. In the other case, shallow pools of water were existing in the rocks—natural holes.

Ishmael grows up and dwells in the 'wilderness of Paran,' becoming an 'archer' (Gen. xxi. 20). It is a common mistake to think that the Bible term 'wilderness' has the same meaning as 'desert.' It is not so. 'Wilderness' really means a place or region which wild beasts inhabit. The wilderness of Paran lies south of the 'way of the Red Sea,' which 'road,' or 'way,' is now called the 'way of the Haj,' for it is the route taken by the Mecca pilgrims on the way past 'Nakhl.' Ishmael, in short, was a Bedawy, and he takes a wife out of Egypt, which would be quite near; easily, he might get an Egyptian wife from any of the Egyptian colonies which then existed close by, and where they worked the various mines of copper and turquoise. There is a life-like scene between Abimelech, the King of Gerar, and Abraham, because of a well of water. As I before noticed, 'wells' would draw a settled population, and disputed proprietorship of land would follow. 'The land question' has ever been a difficulty. The well is given up, and called Beersheba—a name famous for evermore with the history

of Israel. Its meaning, 'the well of the oath,' records the covenant with the king. Abraham, ever thoughtful, plants a 'tamarisk' (R.V.) grove there, for shade. This is a life-like touch, for only those trees would grow in such a locality.

Beersheba is now called Bir Seb'a. Palmer* found two wells filled with water, one dry, and traces of four others. The dry one was built of fine solid masonry, and in good condition. The west side of the valley was banked up with a wall of ancient masonry, to prevent the valley falling in. The hill-sides are covered with ruins. The country around is a fine rolling plain or down, broken up by torrent-beds, in spring covered for miles with grass, flowers, and shrubs. The Arabs say the pasture is usually so rich that the grass and herbage grow up to the knees. When Palmer visited it, there had been a drought, and the whole pasture-land was burnt and bare as the desert. In Abraham's time it was not, probably, the deserted country it now is, for Palmer found, not far off, old, very old houses, nearly in perfect preservation, built often of hewn stones—especially the lintels and doorposts—circular in form. These houses were about seven or eight feet in diameter. Flint arrow-heads and other relics were found—stone circles, cairns. Every hill is covered with ruins. Palmer even found beams of acacia-wood. No trees now exist. He found 'grainery pits'—in short, ample proofs that at some early period this region was thickly inhabited. Many of its people may have been Horites, and lived in caves. But enough here has been said to show that there were good reasons why Abimelech's servants were so jealous of Abraham founding new settlements. In later days, as we shall see, this region was even more densely populated.

In January, 1884, Professor Hull,† with the exploring party

* 'Desert of the Exodus,' pp. 387-390.

† 'Mount Seir.'

sent by the Palestine Exploration Fund, visited Beersheba. At the time of his visit, the wâdy in which the 'wells' are situated was a watercourse, owing to rains, and the wells only a few yards from the torrent. The old well-sinker knew that the chances of a constant supply were greatest in the low ground which borders a wâdy, and that the water from the wâdy itself would find its way by percolation into the well. Yet these wells are at a sufficient elevation to prevent the torrent-water, which is usually turbid, from getting direct access to the water in the wells. Great judgment was shown in the selection of the site—great skill in workmanship to cut out of the limestone rock wells of such depth and excellence. Major Conder* says the depth of the large well is over forty-five feet, lined with rings of masonry to the depth of twenty-eight feet, and he discovered that the *masonry* is not ancient. Fifteen courses down he found a stone with an inscription in Arabic dated 505 A.H. —that is, in the twelfth century—showing that it was then restored. The country is strewn with ruins of wells and foundations of buildings; lines of foundations mark the ancient city—lines half a mile in extent when Canon Tristram† visited it. The vast uneven plateau, almost green, was pastured over by thousands of goats, horned cattle, and camels. Several Arab encampments were in sight, and, moreover, there were large portions of unfenced land cultivated with corn by the Arabs. Wheat and barley are here grown. The land is ploughed or scratched, each piece lying fallow two years, and sown the third year. Rope marks worn by the water-drawers have worn deep flutings in the limestone. No less than 143 flutings were counted, the shallowest four inches deep. Marble troughs were lying about, and all day long Bedawîn and their wives were drawing water and filling skins. There are traces

* 'Tent Work,' p. 96.

† Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' p. 369.

of pillars of an ancient open roof over the well. The whole country is now treeless. Flowers of crocus, blue iris, and crimson ranunculus abound, and for creatures there are sand-grouse and plover, with flocks of the great crane, a few ruffled bustards, and herds of gazelles.

Abraham 'sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days.' That is the whole hint of time. Then 'God did prove Abraham.' He is told to offer Isaac in the land of Moriah. They go three days, and see the place afar off. It would be a good three days' travel to get to Mount Moriah at Jerusalem. They would see it 'afar off' coming over the ridge at Bethlehem; and this one fact, to my mind, quite destroys the efforts of some to identify 'Moriah' with Mount Gerizim; for, coming from the south, the latter mountain cannot be seen at all until you are crossing the watershed and quite *close* to Gerizim. What a test to Abraham's faith! Through this son 'all the nations of the earth' were to be 'blessed,' and yet he is told to sacrifice him! (Gen. xxii. 2). Abraham would be quite familiar with the customs of the dwellers in Canaan, who hesitated not to sacrifice their first-born to their false gods, and so, 'to prove him,' the Almighty says, 'Will you do as much for Me?' His faith stood the test. The ram offered in his stead, father and son return to Beersheba. Sarah would seem to have been dwelling, because of her great age, in the more sheltered and settled town of Hebron, and Abraham has now to encounter the greatest earthly sorrow which falls to the lot of man—Sarah dies (Gen. xxiii. 2). Abraham 'comes' to weep for her. He was not present at her death, and now, as a 'stranger and sojourner' (ver. 4) he has to ask of the children of Heth for a burying-place. What a truly Eastern scene now follows! As a 'mighty prince' (ver. 6) he is treated with the greatest courtesy; he is offered his choice of any sepulchre; he returns courtesy for courtesy; he 'bowed himself to the

people of the land,' or, as the account says later on, 'bowed himself down' (ver. 12). All representations of 'bowing down' in Egyptian or Assyrian sculptures show that the bowing was to the ground, and not, as too many 'pictures' represent, a stiff right-angle bend. Let us stick to the Bible. The stiff bow may be Persian; it never was Egyptian, Assyrian, or Syrian. He buys the field and *cave* of 'Ephron the Hittite,' which fact proves that the Hittite was holding possession in Canaan. Abraham gives the price—'*current*' money. A deed of some sort was drawn up, for the 'field,' cave, and trees were 'made sure'* (ver. 17) to Abraham. His early business training in Ur and Haran here comes out; we know that his descendants have not forgotten this early lesson. The only plot of the 'Promised Land' he ever lives to possess is a field and a tomb.

* Note how legal the statement: 'The field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, *the field*, and the cave which was therein, and *all* the *trees* that were in the *field* that were in all the borders round about were *made* sure.' To this very day it would be necessary in buying a field in Palestine, if you wished to have entire possession, to buy also the *trees*, for the custom of the country is, that the *land* often belongs to one proprietor, and the *trees* to another. Abraham bought up all rights.

We have noted the very exact and legal nature of Abraham's purchase of the cave, field and trees at Mamre. Since those words were written, Mr. Flinders Petrie has shown in London an Egyptian will found by him at Kahun, or, as the town was known 4500 years ago, Illahun. It consists of a settlement made by Sekhenren, 2550 B.C. This will is short, written on papyrus, perfectly legal, a model to lawyers of our time. The testator settles upon his wife, Teta, all the property given him by his brother for life, but forbids her in categorical terms to pull down the houses 'which my brother built for me,' although it empowers her to give them to any of her children that she pleases. A 'lieutenant,' Sibu, is to act as guardian of the infant children. This remarkable document is witnessed by two scribes, with an attestation clause that might almost have been drafted yesterday. It is remarkable, too, as showing that women could acquire and exercise rights of property in old Egypt.

We may now cease to wonder at the exactness of Abraham's deed with Ephron.

The trusty servant goes charged to find a suitable wife for Isaac. A devout man, he prays to God for guidance (Gen. xxiv.), and when the daughters of the city come out to draw water, he sees a damsel 'fair to look upon'—no veil here. She kindly gives water to the servant and his camels. Her generosity is rewarded by the rich gifts. 'Straw and provender' is given to the camels. The message given, she is quite willing to go, though her relations wish for the usual ten days of rejoicing. The girl, however, agrees with the servant's urgent request, and starts at once with her nurse.

The long journey is nearly over. By Hagar's Well (Gen. xxiv. 62) Isaac has been dwelling, but, coming south, he sees the long train of camels. At the same time Rebekah sees her future lord, and out of modesty or coquetry takes her veil and covers herself. Her shy maidenly nature now asserts itself; she may have seemed bold before, but her true nature is now revealed.

Abraham now sends his other sons, by his new wife and concubines, to 'the East country' (Gen. xxv. 6). Where? To the land of Seir, Mount Hor, or to Teman—who can say? Abraham dies. He is buried with his wife in the Cave of Mahpcelah. The son of promise and the son of the bondwoman join in his funeral rites. Isaac goes back to 'Hagar's Well' (ver. 11), while Ishmael dwelt in 'Havilah' (ver. 18), on the way to *Shur*. This 'Havilah' could not have been that described in Gen. ii. 11, 12. That is spoken of as where the best gold was found; but this 'Havilah' of Ishmael was I think, that gold region known so well to the Egyptians, and from which perhaps he got his wife.

Rebekah's two sons are different: one a hunter, fond of meat; the other a 'plain man,' fond of tent life, living, as Arabs who are out of the track of caravans now do, on milk or

vegetable diet. Palmer says: 'The Arabs of the Tih, or this south country, live almost entirely on milk;' and the red lentil is still a favourite food for the poor in Egypt, as every traveller knows. Many a time I have seen my Arabs prepare this dish, though they will eagerly eat it fresh and uncooked. The hasty Esau—probably unfortunate in his hunting—sells his birthright, so little does he value it, and its spiritual promises and privileges. For a full meal of bread and pottage he 'despised his birthright' (Gen. xxv. 34).

The 'plain man' had lived his quiet life, looking after his flock and herds—as did his forefathers—living on simple food; his best dish *red* lentil porridge, the 'red' being the better kind. The lentil is boiled, then olive-oil, and sometimes pepper, is mixed with it—it was then and is now a favourite dish. Barzillai brought some lentils as a gift fit for a king to David (2 Sam. xvii. 28). This pottage is a sustaining healthy food in the East, fit for simple folk, as is the porridge of Scotland.

The usual summer drought compels Isaac to move to Gerar. The king, 'Abimelech'—whose name was evidently given by the Philistines of that time to their kings, just as Pharaoh was the Egyptian title—receives him; but Isaac is warned not to go down to Egypt. His was not the same strong nature as his father's, and probably he would not be able to withstand the temptation of Egyptian worship and custom. This king does not take away Rebekah from her husband, and reproves Isaac for his want of trust in him, his host. Isaac plants corn, and has a wondrous increase, even in that productive land which only requires water to yield its 'thirty or hundred fold.' His flocks and herds increase, and he pays the usual penalty of prosperity: 'the Philistines envied him' (Gen. xxvi. 14-35); they foresee a possible political danger. Ownership of land again! The wells hastily dug by Abraham had been stopped

up and filled with earth. These 'wells,'* I imagine, were like those dug now by the Arabs in Sinai, 'ponds' eight or ten feet deep; they tap surface springs and collect rain-water. Isaac reopens them. They go further into the valley and find, by digging a spring of 'living' water, a prize indeed. This will not dry up in the hot summer, hence the strife with the herdsmen of Gerar. The patriarch names it Esek ('contention'), and, leaving it, digs another, and probably found the same 'living' water that is still more fiercely contended for, for he calls it Sitnah ('enmity'); he removes and digs another: the Philistines strove not for that, so he called it Rehoboth ('room'). Palmer† remarks that the name Rehoboth, being in the plural, may apply to any of the valleys in which he places the present Ruheibeh. In this wâdy he found wells, one ancient, the troughs and other masonry being of immense proportions, and seemingly of very great antiquity. One of the troughs is round, the other circular, cut in blocks six feet by five feet by six feet. This he thought was the well of Isaac. There are many ruins about, remains of a large town. When he visited Ruheibeh the well was partly filled up with *débris*. On the sloping sides of Wâdy el Bîr, near there, are ruins, numerous wells, reservoirs and cisterns. Again, near is a small wâdy or valley, now called Bahr bela mi (the waterless sea);‡ on its left, a small valley, which he thinks is undoubtedly the Sitnah of Isaac. Isaac goes to Beersheba, builds an altar, and calls on the name of the Lord. The promise is renewed to him; he has a peaceful interview with the king and his

* It has been found that a great *underground* stream flows down the valley past Hebron, then southwards to Beersheba, and so passes Gerar to the sea. The Arabs, to-day, make excavations—'pits.' Probably the 'wells' dug by Abraham were of this description. See Quarterly Statement, 1881, p. 38.

† 'Desert of the Exodus,' vol. ii., pp. 290, 383, 385.

‡ 'Desert of the Exodus,' vol. ii., p. 385.

captains. They have a feast to ratify their friendship. It must have been a 'temperance' feast, for they 'rose betimes in the morning,' renewing their oath of friendship, and the visitors go back to Gerar.

Esau, carrying out his contempt of his birthright, makes a marriage which causes grief to his parents. And then comes the story of Jacob's deceit, under his mother's guidance. Esau, though a worldly man, was yet generous, frank, self-forgetful, and he had a blessing, too, and though for a time he hated his brother, yet we know how frankly he forgave him in the end. The orthodox religious world is too often like Jacob, timid and wily. Though he had the birthright, yet he had great sorrow. The Bible relates facts, and does not extenuate or excuse the bad deeds of good men. Jacob is sent away from home to Padan-aram. The long way from Beersheba to Bethel is passed; he halts at this place to sleep; he would know its history; he lays his head upon a stone. It would not be difficult to find one on those stony hilltops at Bethel, covered as they are with boulders. He takes the stone and erects it as a pillar, and pours oil on the top of it (Gen. xxviii. 18). This menhir, or 'long stone,' is the simplest and perhaps the oldest of human monuments; it is the parent of the obelisk, and was the earliest method of marking a famous place. It was used by the Canaanites. Many still exist; one in Moab, called Hajr el Mansúb,* has a name identified radically with the Hebrew word translated 'pillar' in the Bible; and here one may perhaps say a few words on the ridiculous theory that the 'Coronation Stone' in Westminster Abbey is the veritable stone Jacob set up, said to have been in the Temple of Solomon, then by Jeremiah brought to Ireland. We are to believe that it was the 'throne of David,' that Solomon 'placed it in the Temple as the chief corner-stone.' It is

* Conder, 'Heth and Moab,' p. 253.

only necessary to mention these assertions—argument is useless.*

Jacob goes on his journey, arrives at a well where the sheep are lying about. The stone is rolled over the well-mouth, and it being 'high day,' it is time the cattle should be gathered together for food and water. So Rachel comes with her father Laban's sheep. She is pointed out to Jacob, who rolls away the stone and kisses the damsel. That she should have been sent with the sheep proves that she was of tender age—from seven to ten years, not older. All Eastern customs prove, as may be seen to-day, that only young girls of that age are allowed to tend the sheep, or go alone. Rebekah, in her case, remember, went 'with the daughters of the city.' Eastern customs are unchangeable. Jacob kisses the child, and loves her at once. It is a case of love at first sight. She is not of a marriageable age, and so the man proposes to wait seven years for her. This is the simple explanation of the puzzle. Jacob serves the seven years, and then is tricked—he has to serve another seven. In time he wishes to go away. Laban refuses consent. Jacob, still wily, gets the better of his father-in-law, whose own sons grumble. So, after consulting with his wives, Jacob 'stole away unawares.' He passes over the river—which must be the Euphrates; probably at the same ford which Abraham crossed—and 'sets his face to the mountains of Gilead.' After a seven days' chase, he is overtaken by Laban, who reproaches Jacob for so secretly departing, urging he would have liked the usual feast and rejoicing; but his main ground of complaint is that Jacob has stolen his 'gods.' It would seem that Jacob was ignorant of the theft by Rachel. A search is made. Rachel, pleading illness, refuses to rise from the camel-furniture, under which she has hidden the 'Tera-

* It has been, in fact, proved to be of the kind of stone most common in Scotland.

phim.' The word is obscure; it is in the plural, and implies images — probably of human form. Laban seems to have attached great value to them, for he calls them his 'gods.' And yet, in Gen. xxiv. 49-53, we are told that he believed in the true God. They would seem to have had something to do with magic. They are afterwards often mentioned in Jewish history. Jacob is very wrath, and details his twenty years of hard service; how that he was responsible for everything; how that the drought by day, and the frost by night, destroyed his sleep (Gen. xxxi. 40); that he served fourteen years for his wives and six for his flocks, having his wages changed ten times. It is a purely Eastern scene. The high excitement, the loud wrangle, the vigorous gesticulation, can be seen now when Arabs meet. But after the storm a calm. Jacob again puts up a menhir—'pillar'—and tells his brethren to gather stones and make a heap, and then they 'did eat' by the heap —the usual solemn ratification of peace, to this day existing. The heap is called Galeed (ver. 48), which seems a play or pun on the word Gilead, which means 'stony,' or 'a rocky region.' It is also called Mizpah ('the watch-tower'). And they make a compact that neither will pass that heap to injure the other.

Laban departs. Then the angels of God meet Jacob, who calls the place Mahanaim ('the two hosts'). The Septuagint says, where Israel 'saw the camp of God encamped.' Many have been the attempts to identify this place. Canon Tristram* thinks he has found the place in Birket Mahneh, where there are five fine ponds—'Birket'—and some ruins. Dr. Merrill, of the American Survey, does not accept this place. Mr. Laurence Oliphant thinks, after an examination of the country, that Canon Tristram is more likely to be right than Dr. Merrill; while Major Conder says the site is 'unsettled.' He gives many reasons. Jacob was going to Edom to meet Esau

* 'Land of Israel,' p. 474.

(Gen. xxxii. 3). He had sent messengers, and they had returned, hearing that Esau was coming with 400 men. Jacob, afraid, divides his party, passes his wife Leah and flocks over the ford of Jabbok, while he remains on the other side (ver. 22, 23). Then there is that wonderful wrestling with the angel, and Jacob calls the place Peniel, which means 'face' or 'appearing' of God. This 'Peniel' would seem to have been a ridge, for Jacob passed over it as the sun rose; and Conder* suggests that the high summit of the hill now called Jebel Osh'a is the place. In Murray's map a valley called Fâneh is marked. If this is correct, the Arabic word would be a good translation of the Hebrew, Penuel. Jacob no doubt was going on the old pilgrim-road to the north. And we find from Josh. xiii. 26 that Mahanaim is noted as opposite the border of Debir—'the edge of the ridge.' Mahanaim was near a wood, for Absalom was killed there. The slopes of Mount Gilead are clothed with woods of fine oak. As to the site of Mizpeh, it is remarkable that close to a village called Sûf, near Jerâsh, there is still existing a fine† group of rude-stone monuments, showing it was once a sacred centre. And it is curious to note how closely dolmen centres in Eastern Palestine are connected with the early history of Israel. It is the case at Nebo. Gilgal, Bethel are clearly mentioned as places where menhirs once stood. If Sûf be the Mizpeh of Gilead, we do there also find a rude-stone centre in the Galeed of Jacob.

If we are unable to fix with absolute certainty the position of Mahanaim, it is different with the 'ford' over which Jacob passed his flocks. The Jabbok, now called the Zerka ('blue river'), has been well explored by competent travellers. They describe it as a fine stream running between sandstone banks—a stream which has many cascades, the slopes of the gorge

* 'Heth and Moab,' p. 179.

† *Ibid.*, p. 243.

clothed with oleander, and having here only one ford, or, rather, only one practicable. Here was the meeting with Esau, whose wild retainers would be crowding the opposite slope. The cautious Jacob keeps his most dearly beloved Rachel and Joseph 'hindmost,' giving them a chance of escape if Esau were not friendly. He bowed himself to the ground seven times—a very great mark of humility. All his fears were groundless. The injured Esau saw only his brother, ran to meet him, embraced him, and fell on his neck and wept! They both wept. Brotherly love and long absence had swept away all angry feelings. They only remembered they were brothers. Twins in birth, they are united again.

Again comes out the cautious nature of Jacob. Esau offers to go before him, or, when that is declined, to leave some of his men. That, too, is declined; so Esau returns on his way to Seir, while Jacob goes to Succoth, builds a house, and makes booths for his cattle. It is evident Succoth was on the main route from Central Palestine to Eastern Gilead, for he was on his way to Shechem. Burckhardt found a ruin east of Jordan called Sukhât, and that ruin is in the territory of Gad, in which we know Succoth was placed. It was probably near the Jabbok ford, and on the main road, for Gideon pursued the Midianites to Succoth, and past Penuel.

Jacob passes on in peace to Shechem, again probably following the route of Abraham. He buys a parcel of ground and erects an 'altar'—not a menhir this time. It seems somewhat strange that nowhere in the Old Testament is it stated that Jacob dug a well here, and yet the distinct statement of the Samaritan woman establishes the fact (St. John iv. 12). All traditions—of Jews, Samaritans, Moslems, and Christians—agree in this. The whole history of Jacob shows his caution. Buying the field, he would have the right to dig a well, and so would avoid all the quarrels his father had had; and his

practical wisdom was never more shown than in thus securing a possession in this the garden of Canaan. It became his homestead, while his flocks could roam on the plain now called El Mŭkhnah.

Many springs exist all around, but he feared trouble, lest the natives should quarrel with his sons when the flocks and herds wanted water. This well is probably the deepest in Palestine. Originally it is believed to have been 150 feet deep. Rubbish has, however, fallen in; but when I was camped there in 1875, on dropping a stone down, it was many seconds before I could hear the splash. Three granite columns were lying on the ground, and there was a ruined arch. The masonry extends down the well about twenty feet; after that the shaft is bored through the rock. The Palestine Exploration Fund, in 1879, proposed to clear it of rubbish and build a low stone wall around it. Plans were drawn. The design was frustrated, and the site was bought by the Greek Church.

However, in 1881 a most interesting discovery was made by Rev. C. W. Barclay.* In a letter to the Palestine Fund, 17th May, he relates how he had often visited the place. But on this occasion, with his wife, they clambered down into the vault, when he chanced to notice, a few feet from the opening, a dark crack between the stones. They removed some stones and earth, and were then able to trace part of a curved aperture in a large slab of stone. They cleared more earth and stones, and soon distinguished the circular mouth of the well, though it was blocked by an immense mass of stone. Calling in aid two men who were looking on, with considerable labour they managed to remove it, and the opening of the well was clear! There was the ledge on which, doubtless, the Saviour rested; there were the grooves in the stone caused by the ropes by which the water-pots were drawn up. The next day they com-

* Quarterly Statement, July, 1881, p. 212.

pletely laid bare the massive stone which forms the mouth. It is of hard limestone, in fair preservation. The exact measurements are given. A boy was lowered to the bottom. It was found to be sixty-seven feet, and then there was a large accumulation of rubbish. In 1866 it was seventy-five feet, and Captain Anderson, of the Survey party, had a narrow escape, for he fainted away, and was insensible for some time on the stones at the bottom. The difference of depth shows what amount of rubbish had been thrown in in those few years.

According to Jerome, the noble Lady Paula found a church round about Jacob's Well, which she entered. The Bordeaux Pilgrim, who visited Gerizim 333 A.D., speaks of 'plane-trees,' and a bath supplied with water from the well, but no church, though other writers do mention it. Bishop Arculf, in 700 A.D., saw the church, and sketched it. It was, however, destroyed before the Crusaders' time. Doubtless, the heaps of ruins, which in 1875 I found scattered about, belonged to that ancient church.

As I before said, the cautious patriarch dug this well, hoping to escape quarrel with the people of the land. We all know how all his hopes were frustrated. The sad story of Dinah, and the revenge of her brothers, force him to leave; but so great was the terror round about them that none pursue, and Jacob goes on to Bethel—burying under the oak at Shechem the 'strange gods' (Gen. xxxv. 2-4), the Teraphim, stolen by Rachel, and the rings in their ears. They purified themselves, and changed their garments. Why was this? Jacob, with all his faults, and weak towards his family, still clung to the Lord God; he goes to Bethel, and again builds an altar. Rebekah's nurse dies, and is buried below Bethel, under the oak (ver. 8). No more hint as to the grave. There are no oaks there now. Again Jacob erects a 'menhir,' pouring out a drink-offering and oil (ver. 14). It is remarkable how often this is noted of

him. They journey on. Benjamin is born; and Rachel, the dearly-loved wife, dies, and is buried in the way to Ephrath—Bethlehem (Gen. xxxv. 19). He set up a 'pillar' over her grave. That 'pillar' has long disappeared, but has been replaced at various times by different buildings. Jerome, in his account of the pilgrimage of Santa Paula, says she 'stood beside the tomb of Rachel.' The Bordeaux Pilgrim, 333 A.D., says: 'From Jerusalem, going to Bethlehem, on the road on the right hand is a tomb, in which lies Rachel, the wife of Jacob.' A tomb still exists, but it is merely an ordinary Moslem wely-tomb, a small building, twenty-three feet long by twenty feet high, a roof, a dome plastered over with mortar. There must have been a large arch at one time. Traces of other arches can be also seen. Pilgrimages are still made to it by the Jews. The walls are covered with names—many Hebrew. This is, again, one of the few places in the Holy Land in which Jew, Mohammedan, and Christian traditions agree. Though some have thought Rachel's sepulchre was *north* of Jerusalem, I presume to say that no one who knows the country would so place it. The Bible says: 'There was still some way to come to Ephrath' (ver. 16). The Hebrew word translated in A.V. 'some way' really means 'a little way,' and this agrees with the position of this present tomb.

'Then Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder' (Gen. xxxv. 21). We get this name Eder again in Joshua xv. 21, when it is spoken of as one of the towns of Judah in the extreme south, on the borders of Edom. Eder means 'tower of the flock.' The traditions of 700 A.D. and 867 A.D. place it near Bethlehem. In the Jewish Mishna it is also placed not far from Bethlehem. The Targum of Jonathan adds, 'which is the place where shall be revealed the King Messias in the end of days.' There is a ruin called by the Arabs 'The Ruin of the Sheepfold,' and the Survey party men-

tion this, and add, 'Walls, cisterns, vaults, and tombs—probably early Christian ruins.'* Another Rabbinical tradition appears to refer to the same place. It is about four and a half miles from Bethlehem. The mediæval site can be recognised close to the so-called 'Shepherd's Plain.' East of Bethlehem there exists a small chapel, pillars, and ruins of a larger building. There is no spot in the country about so well fitted for an encampment.

Jacob goes to his father at Mamre (ver. 27)—Hebron. Isaac dies, and Esau and Jacob bury him (Gen. xxxv. 29).

We can now speak of the Cave of Machpelah. In modern times two very competent observers have been allowed to enter the mosque at Hebron—Dean Stanley, with the Prince of Wales; later, Major Conder, with the Royal Princes, in 1881. First, let us note who is buried there: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah. Jacob buried Leah (Gen. xlix. 31); there he also was buried (Gen. l. 13). This is the last Biblical mention of the Cave of Machpelah. It is strange that St. Stephen should say they were buried at Shechem (Acts vii. 16). Josephus says the monuments existed in his day. They were of 'beautiful marble, and admirably worked.' The Bordeaux Pilgrim, A.D. 333, describes the monuments. We shall see that the stones are older than Herod. Hebron is very old: 'built seven years before Zoan in Egypt' (Numb. xiii. 22). The terebinth, or oak, was shown in the days of Josephus, and still the name lingers, for the field below the building is still called 'Field of the Terebinth.' The sanctity of the place has ever been venerated by Jew, Christian, and Moslem. There were great objections raised when the Prince of Wales wished to enter the mosque, which, from its form, shows it to have been a church of the Byzantine period, afterwards made into a

* 'Survey Western Palestine,' Jerusalem Sheet, and Conder, Quarterly Statement, 1876, p. 98.

mosque. In this mosque are shown the so-called tombs. Each is enclosed in a chapel, or shrine, closed with gates. In different recesses are shown the shrine of Abraham and Sarah. The latter had a pall over it. No one was allowed to enter, it being the tomb of a woman. The Prince was allowed to enter the shrine of Abraham after a prayer by the chief of the forty guardians of the mosque, who said, 'O friend of God, forgive this intrusion.' The so-called tomb was a coffin-like structure, six feet high, built of blasted marble or stone, hung with three carpets, green and gold. In the area of the mosque are placed the tombs of Isaac and Rebekah. The same rule of exclusion applied to Rebekah's tomb. In recesses are the tombs of Jacob and Leah. They were not allowed to enter the tomb of Isaac, on the plea that he was of a jealous disposition. No tomb shown of Rachel or Ishmael, as one might expect from Moslems.

But how as to the embalmed body of Jacob, which may be supposed to be intact? The only hint of the sacred cave was a small circular hole about eight inches across, of which one foot above the pavement was built of strong masonry, but of which the lower part was of the living rock. This cavity appeared to open into a dark space. The guardians of the mosque believed it to extend under the whole platform. Here, undoubtedly, is the ancient Cave of Machpelah. Sometimes a lamp is let down into this opening, for the guardians say, 'The saint likes to have a lamp at night.'

Moslem and Christian together for 600 years held this sanctuary, and no attempt was made to explore the cave! Thus far Dean Stanley. Other accounts have been given; they are not considered trustworthy.

What did Major Conder see in 1881?*

* 'The Princes' Visit to the Holy Land,' Conder, pp. 5-27, Palestine Exploration Fund.

He was able to take a plan, to measure the walls. Some of the courses of stones, he says, are in average height 3 feet 7 inches; the longest stone seen and measured was 24 feet 8 inches by 3 feet 8½ inches in height; the thickness of the walls between the buttresses, 8½ feet; the height of ancient wall, 46 feet average. A modern wall is built on the top.

The cave was not entered. It is below the floor. There were *three* known entrances, but they were flagged over, and, of course, were not allowed to be broken, as that would be a desecration. The sheikh of the mosque described the cave as being double, which agrees with the original name, Machpelah ('division in half'). No historical notice of the building of the great wall is to be found. In the Middle Ages the cave was always spoken of as 'the double cave.' At one point is a shaft. A lamp was lowered, and a chamber seen about fifteen feet below that of the mosque. The four walls could be seen. It is said to lead to the western cave. The doorway was also seen. That closely resembled the doorways which give access to ancient rock-cut tombs in Palestine. The cave probably resembled many of the rock-cut sepulchres in Palestine, with a square antechamber quarried, and two inner sepulchral chambers; and at some later time access has been made through the *roof*, now the *floor* of the present mosque. A Greek inscription was noticed, built into the wall—an invocation to Abraham to bless and protect certain individuals. It probably dates from the time of Justinian.

No modern explorer has ever been allowed to enter the cave.

Major Conder and Sir Charles Wilson think that the masonry of the wall is of the same date as that of the wall of the 'Wailing Place' at Jerusalem, and certainly Herodian. It is, however, curious that Josephus, who speaks of the building as existing in his day, should, if built by Herod, not have

noticed its erection when he spoke of so many buildings Herod did build.

Jacob dwelt in the land of Canaan. Joseph, living as a shepherd with his brothers, a lad of seventeen years old, tells his father of the evil doings of Reuben, his brother. His father loved him more than all the others, 'because he was the son of his old age.' He shows his want of judgment in making Joseph a 'coat of many colours.' The dress of the ordinary shepherd would be a short under-garment, like a shirt, confined at the waist by a leathern girdle; a long cloak of camel-hair, or a tanned sheepskin, as often worn now by shepherds; a short garment like a jacket; a simple head-covering like a handkerchief, fastened round the head by a cord of camel-hair dyed black. This head-dress is now called *keffiyeh*. The corners can be drawn across the mouth and fastened at the back in the cord. This head-covering is most useful in the East, as it thus protects the mouth and nostrils from dust or hot wind. The 'coat of many colours' might be described as a gentleman-farmer's coat — longer than the usual shirt, with pendent sleeves, and made of fine linen or silk, in stripes of many colours, just as may be seen to-day on a well-to-do farmer or sheikh.

Joseph has dreams. Boy-like, he tells his brothers. No doubt he was somewhat puffed up by the distinction of dress and extreme fondness of his father, who appears to have been dwelling near Hebron. Jacob sends his sons away to Shechem, to the plot of land he had bought, probably to get them away from evil associates, and for better pasture for the flocks. He sends Joseph to Shechem to find out how they are going on. It would be a long journey if on foot, as it seems to have been. He found them not. 'Wandering in the field' (Gen. xxxvii. 15)—probably the 'very parcel of ground bought' by Jacob—he is seen by a man, who tells him he had overheard them say,

'Let us go to Dothan' (ver. 17). If you were to ask a native of Shechem to-day, 'Where is the best pasture-ground for sheep?' he would tell you, 'Dothan.' Because there would be better pasture there than at Shechem is, I think, the reason they moved on. He goes after them; they see him 'afar off.' Here is a touch of local truth; for, after climbing the high hill north of Samaria, which would be Joseph's route, he would then descend the steep northern slope of the ridge, and at Dothan would be easily seen afar off. His figure would tell against the sky-line. They recognised his figure and dress, sharp-sighted, as all Arab shepherds are to-day. They have often distinguished and told me who was coming, when I required my opera-glass to tell if their statements were correct. They cry to each other, 'The dreamer cometh!' (ver. 19) and propose to slay him; but Reuben, of whose evil deeds Joseph had told, would not allow it. Reuben was not altogether bad. One would have said, out of revenge, *he* would have been the one to do the lad ill. He proposes they should cast him into a pit, meaning that he might deliver him and restore him to his father. This pit was empty, and had no water—the usual sort of pit or pond dug even now by Arabs and shepherds to get rain-water, perhaps ten feet deep, with sloping sides, and not that stone well pictures will persist in representing. The incorrect art given in pictures, especially for the young, is a fruitful source of error. The old masters have much to answer for in their pictures of Christ, and moderns, too, are not exempt from blame. Everyone who draws sacred subjects should take care and study the text, and not be like a popular artist—now dead—who, when asked to illustrate a Bible, agreed, but asked his publisher to send round the book he was to illustrate!

They sit down to eat, and, behold! a caravan—Ishmaelites coming from Gilead with spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going

to Egypt (ver. 25). This caravan was on the well-known route, taking, as usual, a convoy of those articles used in the embalming of bodies in Egypt. These men are called Midianites, probably coming from Damascus, which has always been the great emporium of the East. Joseph is sold to them for twenty pieces of silver (ver. 28), and they go on their way. Reuben would seem to have been away at the moment; he is full of grief; he knew of his past sin, and naturally thought suspicion would rest on him. The Midianites would soon be out of sight, as they would go their usual route through the plain of Dothan westward. They would traverse the maritime Plain, and so take the 'way of the Philistines' to Egypt; for the Midianites and the Children of the East held sway in this region up to the time of the Judges, which is also stated on Egyptian inscriptions.

And now again comes a bit of purely Eastern deceit: they kill a he-goat, dip the coat belonging to Joseph in the blood, and they bring it *themselves* (ver. 32) to their father! The poor old man recognises it; his grief is unbounded. The torn garments, the bandage of sackcloth, are all Eastern marks of sorrow. He says, 'I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning' (ver. 35), and yet he was deceived. Objectors to the Bible have often said it excuses the bad deeds of its so-called saints, and represents them as committing grave offences; but read what is written of Jacob; because the Bible is true and relates faithfully the dark sins of good men, it never *excuses* them. Jacob deceives his father; what are the consequences? He has to fly from his home; he has to suffer heat and cold and loss of sleep for his wife, and he is *deceived;* his wages are changed ten times; his own favourite wife steals from her father things he values, and which are a snare to her. He hopes for peace at Shechem, and takes great precautions; but his sons cause him great trouble; his dearly-beloved wife

dies; his eldest son Reuben dishonours him. He has a favourite son; his own brothers sell him as a slave, and deceive their father, and see without any compunction his great grief. Through all his life he suffers at the hands of others from deceit. Do not the words of Moses apply here, 'Be sure your sin will find you out' (Numb. xxxii. 23)?

The Midianites arrive in Egypt; he is sold in Zoan, or Tanis —now called San, a city which worshipped Set, or Baal; for though the Hyksos had become Egyptians, they yet regarded Set as the chief object of their worship. Zoan at this time was really the civil capital of Pharaoh, and stood near the western limit of his land. Potiphar, to whom Joseph was sold, was apparently chief officer of Pharaoh's guard, probably the chariot corps, for on this frontier the chariot guard was stationed. The name Potiphar is a purely Egyptian name, meaning 'the gift of the risen one,' or, as others* translate it, 'devoted to the Sun-god,' both meanings being the same.

Joseph prospers in the house; he is made overseer. In the many Egyptian inscriptions all over Egypt we can see the 'overseer' represented, now directing the labourers in the field; now taking account of the crops, writing down on tablets the goodly store of goods; introducing what strangers might come to the master, or directing punishment to offenders—all was in the hands of the overseer; and does not the Bible say Potiphar left all to Joseph? The youthful, handsome Hebrew overseer is assailed and tempted by Potiphar's wife. Either her husband did not quite believe her, or he saw that the Lord was with Joseph; therefore, he did not put him at once to death, but placed him in prison, where the king's prisoners were put. But the Lord never forsakes His own servants. They may have sore trials; but the man who could say, 'I cannot do this wickedness, and *sin against God*' (Gen.

* 'Dwellers on the Nile,' W. Budge, p. 86.

xxxix. 9), was not deserted in his hour of bitter trial by his God.

There is still existing a papyrus on which is written what is called 'The Tale of the Two Brothers,'* a story before the times of Joseph, written at considerable length—telling how a wife of the elder brother assailed the younger one, who fled; she then accused him to her husband, who sought to kill him; but he was warned, and the Sun-god protected him. The brother in time learnt the truth, and killed his wife. This, and much more, is related in the old story, of which the full account can be read in the pages of Brugsch.

The captain of the guard of the prison makes Joseph an overseer really of all the prisoners. The real piety, the transparent honesty and uprightness of Joseph, were felt by this captain, who probably had known the accused in his long years of service with Potiphar; for Joseph was seventeen years old when sold, 'two full years' in prison, and 'thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh King of Egypt' (Gen. xli. 46). So it follows he must have been about eleven years in Potiphar's house. He had risen from the position of a slave to be so that he could say, 'Saving my master, there is none greater in this house than I' (Gen. xxxix. 9).

It was not a sudden fancy Potiphar took to him, but the result of long years of honest service. Doubtless so important a man would be well known to the captain of the prison, and we see from his conduct that he felt Joseph had been falsely accused.

Two men especially are mentioned as being put in his charge—the chief butler and the chief baker. We know not what their crimes were, but they each dream, and are sad because 'there is none that can interpret' (xl. 6)—that is, being in prison, they had no access to the professional

* Brugsch, 'History of Egypt,' i., pp. 309-311; also quoted by Sayce.

magicians, or wise men. Joseph tells them that 'to God alone belong interpretations.' But he asks them to tell him. He tells the chief butler that in three days he will be restored to favour. The cupbearer's office, as we can see on the inscriptions, was one of honour. It was near the king's birthday, and it was common to have rejoicings on that day. It was considered holy. And, as now, amnesties for past offences were granted; all Joseph asks is that his case may be mentioned to Pharaoh. He knows his innocence, and doubts not he could prove it if tried.

The cupbearer promised, but forgot!

He would be in those scenes of feasting which are so fully represented on the Egyptian inscriptions, so perhaps it was no wonder this man forgot in courtly apartments the promises he had made in prison. The air of courts has ever been a difficult one to live in.

The chief baker, reassured by the good news for his fellow-prisoner, tells his dream. He says he dreamt he was carrying three baskets of white bread—bread for Pharaoh—on his head, the uppermost basket holding 'all manner of baked meats'—all kind of food, that is. At Thebes we see ample picture representations of baking: one man is carrying on his head a long basket, on which are placed rolls of bread, while others are engaged in the various processes of cake-making, cooking lentils, making macaroni on a pan over the fire, kneading the dough, or preparing the oven. The birthday of Pharaoh comes. The explanation given by Joseph comes true. The cupbearer is restored to favour—the other executed. In the inscriptions we have ample representations of Egyptian justice. The goddess Thmei*—which appears to have been the origin of the Hebrew Thummin, this word, according to the Septuagint, meaning 'truth'—is always represented 'having her

* Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' p. 205.

eyes closed, showing, as Plutarch says, 'that justice ought neither to be accessible to bribes, nor guided by favour or affection.' Rich or poor, ignorant or learned, were placed on an equal footing, and it was the *case*, not the person, upon which judgment was passed. In fact, Egyptian laws seem to have been dictated by a scrupulous regard to justice and humanity. And very rarely was the death punishment inflicted. This being so, it would seem that the chief baker must have been guilty of some great crime.

Pharaoh has two dreams, which the magicians and wise men cannot interpret. The cupbearer then speaks of Joseph.

When there is an opportunity of bringing himself into importance by helping Pharaoh out of his difficulty, he can remember the Hebrew.

Joseph is sent for. He is brought hastily 'out of the dungeon.' But before he is fit to appear before the king, he is 'shaved,' and changes his raiment. Here, again, the monuments offer us many illustrations.* Egyptians only allowed their hair to grow during the times of mourning. To neglect the hair was considered dirty. When a man of low station is represented, he is always drawn with a beard. The head was shaved, only a few locks being left. Priests shaved the whole body every three days. In many tombs have I seen representations of the barber at work. There is a hymn in praise of learning, where the hard work of the barber is contrasted with the easy work of the scribe. It is translated by Dr. Birch:

> 'The barber is shaving till evening.†
> When he places himself to eat, he places himself
> on his elbows.
> He places himself at street after street

* Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' p. 326.

† 'Records of the Past,' viii., p. 148.

to seek after shaving.
He wearies his hands to fill his belly,
as bees feed by their labour.'*

Joseph is brought before Pharaoh. The great man says he has heard of him, that he can interpret dreams. Joseph says, 'it is not in him, but God.' His faith, his trust in God, stands every test. The dreams are told—that of the kine, of the ears of corn. Dr. Birch has seen a reference to the seven cows of Athor pictured in the Book of the Dead; and the Egyptian word 'reed-grass,' there used, is now used in the Revised Version, instead of 'meadow,' as in the Authorized Version.

The dreams are interpreted. Joseph says, 'God showing what He is about to do.' He then gives the king advice. Pharaoh consults with his advisers. Courtier-like, they agree with the king, and Joseph is 'set over all the land of Egypt' (Gen. xli. 41)! From the dungeon to a palace at one bound!

'Pharaoh took off his signet-ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand' (Gen. xli. 42). That is, he invested him with the royal signet-ring—the seal by which the royal assent was given to all state documents. Joseph then would get the king's secretaries to write any decree he might like to dictate, would then rub ink with his finger on the seal, press it on the papyrus roll, and it was a decree. Such is the custom to-day. My permit to enter the convent of Mount Sinai is 'sealed' in exactly the same manner.

Then he is given 'vestures of fine linen.' So perfect was Egyptian linen, that a piece found at Thebes† has 152 threads in the warp, 71 in the woof, *to each inch.* A piece from Memphis is as fine again; this is also covered with hieroglyphics so finely drawn that the lines are with difficulty

* Old Egyptian razors are to be seen in the Boulak Museum, and also in the British Museum.

† Wilkinson, 'Ancient Egyptians,' pp. 73-83, 139.

followed by the eye, and there is no appearance of the ink having run. When held up to the light—an ancient way of proving fine cloth—no knots, or breaks—as seen in our best cambric—are to be found. Many Egyptian stuffs have various patterns worked into them by the loom, quite independent of those produced by dyeing.

A gold chain is given him. Nothing is more remarkable than the knowledge the ancients had of gold, and how to work it. At Beni Hassan in the early tombs there are representations of goldsmiths: one with a blowpipe is blowing a fire for melting the gold; others are making rings; it is being weighed, a scribe writing down its value; gold is being washed; while walking about is the superintendent directing the workmen. At Thebes are other representations, one especially of a man with a blowpipe, with tongs in one hand, blowing a fire—the fireplace has raised cheeks of metal to confine the heat. Great skill may be inferred, quite apart from the Bible statements. In the history of Abraham we read of earrings and bracelets. Quantities of gold ornaments have been found in tombs dating back as far as 3930 years ago. We can also see that they understood how to crush quartz to powder, and wash it. The whole processes are represented.

The second chariot is also given to the new ruler. The words 'bow the knee' offer some difficulty. Some think they should be translated 'bow the head'; but, for the Hebrew word given, 'bow the knee' is a good translation. Joseph is given a new name, which in Egyptian is Za-pa-unt-pa-aa-ankh, 'governor of the district of the place of life'*—that is, the fertile district of the Delta, where these things took place. He marries a wife, daughter of the priest of On, the Heliopolis of the Greeks. In Hebrew this city is also called Beth-shemesh, *words* having the same meaning, 'the city of the sun.' It had

* 'Fresh Light,' Sayce, pp. 51, 52.

also a civil name, An; its sacred name, Pe Ra. It was the priest city, the great university of the empire; it was, in short, the centre of Egyptian religion. Nothing now remains but a solitary obelisk reared by a prince of the twelfth dynasty, a thousand years before the daughter of its priest became the wife of Joseph. All happened as God had revealed to Joseph. There were the seven plenteous years, and he stored the corn; he has two sons; he calls them by names showing he had not forgotten his early faith; and then the dire famine comes. Famine was a rare occurrence in Egypt, but, dependent as the whole land, and especially the Delta, is upon the river Nile, a low Nile, of course, means a bad year. There are records of famine, for Ameni, an officer of King Usertasen I., has engraved at the entrance of his tomb at Beni Hassan—tombs which we know were of a date long before the time of Joseph—that

'No one was hungry in my days, not even in the years of famine;* for I had tilled all the fields of the district of Mah up to the southern and northern frontiers. Thus I prolonged the life of its inhabitants, and preserved the food which it produced. No hungry man was in it. I distributed equally to the widow as to the married woman. I did not prefer the great to the humble in all that I gave away.'

Records exist of a seven years' famine caused through the river failing in 1064 A.D., under one of the Caliphs. Still another record on a tablet at El Kab, Southern Egypt—and that is thought to be the famine in Joseph's time—of a nobleman called Baba. It runs thus: 'When a famine arose lasting many years, I distributed corn to the city each year of famine.' The date of this inscription agrees with the date scholars assign to Joseph.

These inscriptions, anyhow, prove this much: that famine was not unknown; and we must remember that it is only

* 'The Dwellers on the Nile,' W. Budge, p. 86.

of very recent date that the cities of the Delta have been found, and not yet have the inscriptions been read. Theologians were misled as to the position of the cities reigned over by the Pharaoh who was patron to Joseph. Discoveries come thick and fast* and I think there are good grounds for hoping that ere long more confirmation, more light, will be thrown by excavation and reading of the inscriptions.

Now all nations came to Egypt for corn; it was ever the granary for the ancient world. Jacob, living in Canaan, 'saw there was corn in Egypt' (Gen. xlii. 1); that is, it was a matter of common knowledge. The caravans would spread the news.

* On p. 64 of first edition of this book I remarked, 'Discoveries come thick and fast, and I think there are good grounds for hoping that ere long more confirmation, more light, will be thrown by excavation, and reading of the inscriptions.'

When I wrote those lines I knew that Professor Sayce had gone to Egypt, and that midway between Minieh and Assiout one of the most extraordinary and unexpected archæological discoveries of modern times was made in Upper Egypt. The mounds of an ancient city, now known as Tell-el-Amarna, have been explored, and wonderful results gained, which completely overthrow much of modern criticism, which is too often an attempt to overthrow the Bible.

Among the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, now in London and Berlin, are some from the Babylonian King Burna-buryas, 1430 B.C. Many are the despatches from Egyptian officers in Palestine and Syria. They throw an unexpected light on the inner history of the country in the age when 'the Canaanite was still in the land,' and show that the literary influence of Babylonia in the age *before* the Israelitish conquest of Palestine was great.

Professor Sayce read a paper on these discoveries in London last July. Ere long we may hope he will publish to the world the full results of his investigations. We can now only say that these tablets relate to Palestine, to the Philistines, to the Hittites, and help to clear up the legends of Manetho. This discovery should stimulate us to excavate some of those great mounds in Southern Judæa, and, doubtless, other important 'finds' will reward the explorers.

The majority of the Tell-el-Amarna letters have been published. They prove to be letters from Syria and Mesopotamia, and by Asiatics—they are therefore Semitic, perhaps Hittite—to Egyptian kings.

He would see the camels laden with corn passing on their routes, both on 'the way of Shur' and on 'the way of the Philistines.' He sends his sons. They see no fear; they go in a large company. We may note, by the way, that though Joseph's actions towards the people of Egypt appear at first sight harsh, yet Gen. xlvii. 25 shows that the people of that land were grateful. One who had known adversity and had been so true could not be unkind. And their words, 'Thou hast saved our lives,' must be taken in their full meaning of gratitude.

Jealously guarded as the great wall of Egypt was, the governor would be soon told of the arrival of this Semitic band. Inscriptions show what care was exercised. We read of the great precautions taken to prevent strangers crossing the frontier, 'unless they brought cattle, or came to hire themselves for service.'

These rough shepherds are brought before the ruler, and 'bowed down themselves with their faces to the earth.' Inscriptions in plenty show this sort of thing done.

Joseph knew them. They?—they in their wildest dreams never thought of connecting their sold brother with this great ruler. To digress a little: I have often spoken of 'the wall and forts' which guarded this, the most open frontier of Egypt, the side from which all the great invasions came. The proof of its very early existence is to be found in a papyrus obtained by Lepsius, and now in the Berlin Museum. That celebrated man translated it—its date of the twelfth dynasty—the 'old' Egyptian empire long before the days of the Hyksos invasion. This papyrus tells how Sineh, or Saneha, an Egyptian traveller, went eastwards. As he went, he came to this frontier wall, 'which the king had made to keep off the Sakti.' 'There were watchers upon the wall in daily rotation.' In the night

he eluded the sentries, and wandered into a dry and thirsty land. His story is told as follows:

> 'Thirst overtook me in my journey;
> My throat was parched;
> I said, This is the taste of death.'*

He, however, escaped, and settled in Edom, won and married the daughter of the prince of that country, and finally, returning to Egypt, was received with honour by the king. Chabas and Ebers agree as to this early date of the wall. In another papyrus in the British Museum, of the nineteenth dynasty, the wall is again mentioned, in the report of a scribe of an effort to recapture two fugitive slaves, who had fled to the eastern desert, and who, before he could overtake them, 'had got beyond the region of the wall, to the north of the Migdol (tower) of King Seti Mineptah.'†

'Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.'

He speaks harshly to them, tells them they are 'spies' (Gen. xlii.). In the past years they had learnt truthfulness—they tell him they are 'twelve brethren.' Had they not been truthful, they could have said 'ten,' for they might have supposed that he, the Egyptian, as they thought him, could know no better. He appears not to credit their statement, and declares they shall not leave Egypt unless the younger brother of whom they spoke is brought, and Simeon is left bound as hostage. They had sorrowed for their sin, for see how Reuben reminds them of it, and says Joseph's 'blood is required.' We have this custom of 'blood calling for blood' existing amongst the Arabs of to-day: travellers often sneer at what they call the cowardice of Arabs, who, in a fight, will make a great noise, but object to shed blood; it is because, if a man is slain,

* See Trumbull's 'Kadesh Barnea,' pp. 46, 47, and the authorities there quoted.

† Brugsch, 'History of Egypt,' ii., pp. 138-389.

there can never be peace between the tribes again unless the man who killed him is slain by the avenger. Every traveller in the desert can tell of some fugitive from his tribe because of this 'blood feud.' How the Egyptian steward must have rejoiced when told to put back the money in their sacks! He would not know the reason, but intrigue is always grateful to an Eastern. Again poor Jacob has sorrow—he sorrows without hope; but the pressing necessities of famine compel them to go again to Egypt, and, after a great struggle, Benjamin goes with them. They take presents, so the 'famine' only applies to the failure of the corn crop (Gen. xliii. 11).

Arrived in Egypt, Joseph is told of it. They explain how the money was found. The Eastern steward does not speak the truth, and from his lying lips it comes badly that God had given them the money. They are treated as favoured guests, and dine 'at noon' with Joseph. The state and glory with which he is surrounded has not deadened his heart. He is obliged to leave 'to weep.' They marvel at the arrangements of the dinner.

Again the steward is told to hide the money, and *the* 'cup'—a silver cup—is put in Benjamin's sack. They are overtaken. Now the steward must have thought he had them for good—*the cup is found.** Their sorrow is great. Was there ever a more touching story told than that by Judah (Gen. xliv. to end of chapter)?

Joseph can restrain himself no longer, but, weeping, he reveals himself. But how tender is his speech! how he tries

* The steward says: 'Is not this (the cup) in which my lord drinketh, and whereby he indeed divineth?' Cups were used for magical purposes from very ancient times. Then they had inscriptions on them, supposed to have magical influence—water or wine being poured into such cup was supposed to be affected by the inscription; poison was to be detected, or health restored, by the use of this magical cup. The steward is only speaking as an Egyptian would naturally speak.

to take away remorse from them! 'God did send me before you to preserve life,' is his comment on their sin (Gen. xlv. 5).

He tells them of the famine that is yet to come—'five years' more. They are to come to him. But now, 'go in "haste" to my father, and bring him.' Simeon had been released from his bonds—had he been the cruel adviser? It would seem so from his nature, as depicted in Gen. xlix. 5, 6; if so, he had been punished by his bondage. Joseph, though kind, is yet just.

The great king hears the news and is pleased. He gives his own royal commands in the matter. 'Wagons' are to be sent with rich presents. In the Egyptian inscriptions 'chariots' are constantly represented; we can see exactly how the horses were harnessed. Sir Gardner Wilkinson says: 'There is no instance of a representation of a chariot with more than two horses, nor any representation of a carriage with *shafts*, drawn by *one* horse; a pair of shafts has been found, and a wheel with six spokes. There is but one representation of an Egyptian *four*-wheeled car, and that was used for religious purposes.'* The travelling carriage was usually drawn by two oxen. We can see a representation of that at Thebes, but there the occupants are women, and attended by a woman.† In the British Museum there is a representation of a chariot drawn by a pair of mules. With this light, we can form some idea of the sort of 'wagon' sent for Jacob.

It is quite clear from the text that this convoy must have taken the middle or 'Shur road' out of Egypt—that road portions of which were found by the Rev. F. Holland‡—for, in Gen. xlvi. 1, we read that 'Israel came to Beersheba,' that he

* 'Ancient Egyptians,' pp. 381-384.

† Wilkinson, p. 385.

‡ Quarterly Statement, January, 1884, pp. 4-14. Holland says: 'The discovery of this road is regarded as of the greatest importance.'

'rose up from Beersheba,' and with the little ones, women, etc., went in the 'wagons.' These chariots would not be able to come further, because of the hilly nature of the ground. In Gen. xlvi. 28, we read that 'he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to show the way before him unto Goshen.' M. de Naville, in his able work on 'Goshen,'* remarks that 'Goshen' 'belonged to a region which as yet had no definite boundaries, and which extended with the increase of the people over the territory they inhabited. The term "land of Rameses" applies to a larger area.' And further, 'The Septuagint, writing of Heroöpolis, says it is in the land of Rameses, not Goshen.' The Hebrew text (quoted above) 'is vague, but the Septuagint is more precise; they desire to record the tradition of their time and to fix the place where father and son met together. That place is Heroöpolis.' The father and son met. How simple is the Bible story! Joseph 'wept a good while' while he fell on his neck—the Eastern mode of embrace between men, first kissing one side of the neck and then the other. Joseph, ever thoughtful, advises his father what to say to Pharaoh; for though amongst the Hebrews it was ever an honourable occupation to feed sheep, yet 'shepherds were an abomination unto the Egyptians' (Gen. xlvi. 34). Wilkinson† remarks, on the different classes into which Egyptian society was divided, that the Egyptian aristocracy looked upon those who attended cattle as following a disgraceful employment. That would be the reason why Joseph recommended Goshen, because they then would avoid the *native* Egyptians, as well as get good land for pasture; probably, too, as we see from the text, Pharaoh's cattle were kept there. The region named is still the best land for grazing. Then, too, we must remember that the *native* Egyptians had good reason to hate 'shepherds,' for the Hyksos,

* Egyptian Exploration Fund, 'Goshen.'

† 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. ii., pp. 168, 169.

or Shepherd Kings, had conquered their land. In Upper Egypt, which was at this time held by *native* Egyptians, all the inscriptions delight in caricaturing the 'appearance of shepherds.' All happened as Joseph had foreseen. How touching are those words of Jacob, 'Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life'! Ah! yes, he got the coveted birthright by deceit, but sorrow had tracked his steps all through. Though a pardoned sinner, the evil consequences of his sin ever followed him.

After seventeen years in the land of Egypt, Jacob dies; his great dread is that he would be buried in Egypt. As the thoughts of every old man go ever back to the time of his youth, Jacob thinks of the burial-place of his fathers. Joseph swears he will do his wish, and, after blessing Joseph and his sons, he calls his own sons together, that they may hear his last words. And though it does not lie in the scope of this work to dilate on the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, yet I presume to think the tenth verse is so commonly misunderstood that I trust a few words may not be considered out of place.

The sceptre is not to depart from Judah '*till* Shiloh come.'* The Jew never held the sceptre of the world. Even in the reign of Solomon the country ruled over was small as compared to the empire of Egypt or Assyria. And what was it compared to Alexander or Rome? But to the Jew was given the true sceptre of the world, that *he* should be selected by God to be the nation to whom He revealed Himself. He was to hold it 'till Shiloh come'—Shiloh, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour—then 'unto Him shall the obedience of *the* peoples be.' Then the true sceptre—the knowledge of God—passes from the Jew and becomes the common property of mankind. St. Matthew (xii. 21) saw this when he said, 'In His name shall the Gentiles trust.' He was to be 'the Light to lighten the Gentiles' (Isa. xlix. 6),

* Dr. Munro Gibson, in his 'Ages before Moses.'

and when those Greeks came to Philip, and were introduced by Andrew and Philip to Jesus, the prophecy was fulfilled—it had begun its more glorious fulfilment—for did not our Lord say, 'The hour is come that the *Son of man* should be glorified'? (John xii. 20-23).

Jacob dies, and, by Joseph's order, is embalmed. The whole process of this Egyptian custom is amply depicted on the Egyptian monuments. We there read that it was done by members of the medical profession. The Bible says 'physicians.' The number of days of mourning given accords with that of Scripture—seventy—forty of which the Bible expressly says were taken up by the embalming process. Nothing is more completely shown on Egyptian monuments than the feasts—the mourning rites—for the dead. They are on all the tombs from Ghizeh to Abu Simbal, and are well depicted in the pages of Dr. Ebers.*

With a large company of Pharaoh's servants and great state, 'chariots and horsemen,' 'a very great company,' the embalmed body is taken to 'Atad,'† a threshing-floor. So it would be at the commencement of the hill ranges, for threshing-floors‡ were usually in such a position. This place has not been identified; but from the text we can see that the Egyptians stopped here. The hill-passes would not be practicable for chariots, and Gen. l. 13 says: 'His sons carried him into the land of Canaan,

* 'Egypt.'

† It is interesting to note that here we have a proof that Moses wrote the Book of Genesis. The passage runs, 'Wherefore the name of it was called Abel Mizraim, *which is beyond Jordan.*' Many have been the attempts to identify 'Atad' on the *eastern* side of Jordan, forgetting that Moses, writing, as he did, *from* the eastern bank (he was never allowed to cross the Jordan), would naturally speak of the western bank as 'beyond Jordan.' Had the Book of Genesis been written, as some German and other critics profess to think, by later hands, they, living on the western bank, would not have described the place as Moses did.

‡ See Tomkins' 'Life and Times of Abraham.'

and buried him in the field of Machpelah.' From Beersheba to Hebron the country is hilly compared to the flatter land of the 'way of Shur'—'the way' I believe this mourning cavalcade to have passed, for then you enter the limestone region impassable to chariots.

When Joseph returns to Egypt, his brethren fear that now the father is dead he will avenge himself. The nobleness of his nature shines forth still brighter, and he 'comforted them' (Gen. l. 21).

Joseph lives to a ripe old age, and goes the way of all flesh; but, like his father, his thoughts are with that land God has promised to Abraham and his seed. He dies—is embalmed—'he is put in a coffin in Egypt.' How is this? Why was he not taken to Hebron?

The Egyptian monuments give us the clue: The sway of the Hyksos Pharaohs was now being challenged by the native kings of Memphis and Thebes; troubles were on the border; the great man of the Hebrews was dead; his brothers—master herdsmen to Pharaoh—were of no political account, so why should the body be so honoured as to have a state funeral in Canaan?

Objections have sometimes been made to the Biblical account of Jacob's entry into Egypt, on the plea that a few people entering a land so populous as Egypt would surely not be taken into account. Now, though we have not *as yet* discovered on the monuments any direct reference to the recorded events given in the Bible, yet who that has seen, as I have done, those half-faded picture representations of a Semitic tribe entering Egypt, which are at Beni Hassan, can doubt the care that was taken to note the arrival of foreigners and their doings? It is just possible that the records may yet be found; but when we see how carefully Rameses II. effaced all records of these Hyksos and their doings, even recutting the sphinxes at Tanis, we must admit there is but little hope of finding such

inscriptions. And yet explorers in despair one day are full of joy at discovery the next. Let us have patience.

The inscription at Beni Hassan of which I speak was at one time thought to be a record of Jacob's entry, but clearer light has shown that it is of the date 2354—2194 B.C.—long before Jacob. Dr. Ebers and others give full details, and thus describe the picture:

'The earliest representation that has yet been met with of a Semitic race. These, conducted by their prince, Absha, crave admission into the district of Mah. The governor of the district receives the strangers with caution, for his scribe is presenting him with a deed, or tablet, on which the number of the travellers—thirty-seven—is inscribed. The Semitics are bringing gifts of eye-pigment (antimony), with a roe-deer and a gazelle. The men are armed in various manners—one in particular has a piece of wood for flinging, a kind of boomerang—and they have bows, lances, and a target; women on foot, and children on an ass, with another ass to carry the weaver's beam and shuttles, accompanying the tribe. A minstrel strikes the lute in honour of their ceremonious introduction. The sharper features of the Semitic race are clearly distinguished from those of the Egyptians. Elegant ornamental patterns are to be seen on the dresses of the Semitics. In other pictures in the same tombs, among the soldiers, we see red-haired men in a peculiar garb, and these, too, seem to belong to the Semitic tribe. It is remarkable that among the Jews in Egypt to this day blonde hair is not uncommon, while among the Arabs, or Fellahîn, it is extremely rare, and in the time of the Pharaohs it roused the utmost aversion; for red was the colour of Seth, or Typhon, and red-haired people (particularly among the hated foreign interlopers of Semitic origin) were looked upon as Typhonic.'*

* Dr. Ebers, 'Egypt,' ii., pp. 172, 173.

These tombs at Beni Hassan are full of priceless records of the past. However able descriptions of them may be, they yet fail to satisfy those whose good fortune it has been to study the original works.

This family chapter of Jewish history closes in gloom. A coffin holds all that remains of the Jewish ruler. And now in that gloom and sorrow must the Israelites wait. Their champion dead, the curtain falls, not to be lifted for many a year. All is silent as the tomb.

CHAPTER II.

ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

In Exod. i. 6, 7, we read: 'And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.'

Such is the brief record of the three hundred and fifty years which intervened between the close of the book of Genesis and this of Exodus. But see how the historian emphasizes the growth of the nation from the family. They are 'fruitful,' 'increased abundantly, 'multiplied,' 'waxed exceeding mighty,' 'the land filled with them,' anticipating, as it were, the cavils as to their numbers of later ages. During those three hundred and fifty years, as far as the Bible is concerned, the history of Israel is told no further. The dark veil is only lifted to tell this much. The Egyptian monuments, as at present read, tell us nothing of them; but we must bear in mind one or two facts. It is only of late years that Egyptologists have had their attention directed to the true position of the land of Goshen. The discoveries of De Naville and others have come thick and fast. There is yet much more to be discovered in that part of the Delta. Who that knows Egypt will not recall the mud villages of the present Fellahîn, built nearly always on *mounds* —the ruined heaps of ancient temples and towns? I have sketched many a miserable village of to-day that is perched on

the top of an old temple! This fact alone adds to the difficulty of exploration; for, unless you can get the inhabitants to remove, how are you to explore? They have no idea that explorations are conducted in the cause of science. They tell you they know better, and that the real reason is that you are searching for hidden treasure. It is the 'Arabian Nights' again. 'Your books, or Jinns, have told you where the men of old hid their wealth. The knowledge is lost to the true believer, but the infidel, by his dark arts, knows of the place.' It is not only the Fellahîn who think and say this. Witness the conduct of the pasha whom M. de Naville speaks of. A huge stone was found—a monolith. The pasha ordered it to be broken up, on the idea that it contained gold! As I before said, intelligent explorers have been so late in the field. Why, in 1884 De Naville found in a village close to Zagazig—that important junction of the railway—a thick slab of red granite, sculptured on both sides with figures and inscriptions of the thirteenth dynasty, then used as a corner-stone at the end of a street! He found also a tablet of black granite, bearing the name of Ptolemy Philadelphos, which is richly covered with figures and inscriptions; it was then lying in a pond, and used by Fellahîn women as a slab on which to wash their linen!* Bridges and palaces have for long ages past been built from the ruins of the ancient temples, and when used all inscriptions *erased!* Then, too, who has not seen, when examining temples in Egypt, that all the inscriptions *above-ground* were erased by the different conquerors of the land? Why, in the very gardens of Ismaîlia is a sphinx of the Hyksos period, which was *recut* and all Hyksos inscriptions erased by Rameses II.

In 1888 M. de Naville announced further discoveries at Bubastas. 'That this place was an important Hyksos settlement is what no one suspected, but it is a fact conclusively

* See De Naville's reports to Egyptian Fund.

established by the work of the present season. Two black granite statues, the head of one nearly perfect, of the unmistakable Hyksos type; the lower half of a seated statue of an unknown king, also of Hyksos work; and a fine red granite architrave, engraved with the cartouche of Apepi, the most famous of the Hyksos kings, have been discovered.' 'In digging to the southward of the Hall of Osokon I., we found, first, the head-dress of a colossal statue in black granite. The type of the face is Hyksos, the sunken cheeks and the projecting mouth being exactly like those of the Tanis sphinxes. A statue of a Hyksos king wearing the insignia of Egyptian royalty is certainly unique.' Another more important statue was found. The inscriptions give the name and titles of an absolutely unknown king. The inscription describes him as the worshipper of his *ka* (*i.e.*, his ghost or double). This inscription was shown to the Mohammedan official in charge of the Boulak Museum. He at once said, 'That is the Pharaoh of Joseph. All our Arab books call him Reiyân, the son of El-Welid.' The statue shows the left thigh foreshortened, and clad in the striped *shenti*, or folded kilt. The king, in addition to his cartouche, is styled the 'Good God' and the 'Son of Ra.'

The identification of the learned Mohammedan official must be received with extreme reserve, but the identity of the two names is very extraordinary.

'Ra ian' may be read 'Ian-Ra,' and is curiously like the name of the Hyksos Iaunus quoted by Josephus from Manetho. That Joseph served a Hyksos king has long been accepted by the majority of Egyptologists.

Other discoveries show that the Temple of Bast, after being enriched by the Hyksos kings, and before being rebuilt by Rameses II., was yet flourishing in the time of the Restoration. The discoveries are too numerous to mention here. The

results are splendid, and more facts will undoubtedly be soon brought to light.

'The name which Arab tradition gives to Josephus's Pharaoh is all but identical with the name discovered. The tradition says that the Hamites, who peopled Egypt, had been for some time ruled over by women, in consequence of which kings from all quarters were lusting after their land. An Amalekite king named El-Welid invaded it from Syria, and established his rule there. After him came his son, in whose time Joseph was brought to Egypt. It is hard to believe that so striking a coincidence should be due to mere chance.'*

Josephus preserves a fragment of Manetho, an Egyptian writer of the third century before Christ, which fragment gives an account of what the Egyptian priests of that day taught as to the Israelitish race; but Manetho confuses the Israelites with the Hyksos, and in one case makes them the rulers of Egypt, and in another account calls them 'captive shepherds.' His dates are all wrong, for he speaks of the building of Jerusalem at a time thirty-seven years before Abram came out of Haran! It is this Egyptian priest who also says that the Israelites were expelled because they were leprous and unclean. This so-called history of Manetho is a priestly jumble. The curious can read the whole story in Josephus, 'Against Apion.' But if we have no records as yet of the Israelites in the long blank of Bible history, we have a good deal of Egyptian history on the monuments. I will follow here Professor Sayce:†

'The expulsion of the Hyksos conquerors of Egypt, while it brought oppression and slavery to their Semitic kindred who were left behind, inaugurated an era of conquest and glory for the Egyptians themselves. The war against the Asiatics, which had begun in Egypt, was carried into Asia, and under

* *Times*, April 6, 7, 1888.

† 'Fresh Light,' pp. 56, 57.

Thothmes III., and other great monarchs of the eighteenth dynasty, the Egyptian armies traversed Palestine and Syria, and penetrated as far as the Euphrates. The tribes of Canaan paid tribute ; the Amorites or "hillmen" were led into captivity, and the combined armies of Hittites and Phœnicians were defeated in the Plain of Megiddo. On the temple walls of Karnac at Thebes, Thothmes III. (B.C. 1600) gives a list of the Canaanitish towns which had submitted to his arms. Among them we read the names of Zarthan and Beroth, of Beth-Anoth and Gibeah, of Migdol and Ophrah, of Taanach and Ibleam, of Shunem and Chinneroth, of Hazor and Laish, of Merom and Kishon, of Abel and Sharon, of Joppa and Achzib, of Beyrût and Accho, of Heshbon and Megiddo, of Hamath and Damascus. One of the conquered places bears the curious name of Jacob-el, "Jacob the God," while mention is made of the Negeb, or "Southern district," which afterwards formed part of the territory of Judah.

'Two centuries later, when the troublous times which saw the close of the eighteenth dynasty had ushered in the nineteenth, the same districts had again to be overrun by the Egyptian kings. Once more victories were gained over the powerful Hittites in their fortress of Kadesh on the Orontes, and over the tribes of Palestine. Seti I., the father of Rameses II., records among his conquests Beth-Anoth, or Kirjath-Anab ("the city of grapes"—Josh. xi. 21), in the south, as well as Zor or Tyre. Rameses II. himself, the Sesostris of the Greeks, battled for long years against the Hittites on the plains of Canaan, and established a line of Egyptian fortresses as far north as Damascus. The tablets which he engraved at the mouth of the Dog River, near Beyrût, still remain to testify to his victories and campaigns. Representations were sculptured on the walls of Thebes of the forts of "Tabor in the land of the Amorites," of Merom and of Salem, and the capture of the

revolted city of Ashkelon was celebrated both in sculpture and in song.'

We shall afterwards see how these great conquests were but preparing the way for the Israelites.

A new epoch arises for that nation, as we see from Exod. i. 8: 'Now there arose up a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph.'

To understand the full meaning of this, we must again turn to Egyptian monuments; they show us that the Hyksos invaders were not expelled until after long contests, in which victory sometimes inclined to the invaders, sometimes to the native kings who had taken refuge in Upper Egypt. Professor Maspero, on the 3rd of June, 1886, unrolled in Cairo, at the museum at Boulak, some precious mummies; amongst others, that of 'Sekenen-Ra, prince of the Thebaid, who headed the great national parties in the armed rising known as the War of Independence, and thenceforth assumed the title of king, so ranking as the first national Pharaoh of the seventeenth dynasty. This prince is best known by the part which he plays in that precious fragment of legendary romance called "The First Sallier Papyrus," now in the British Museum. Of the War of Independence, and the fate of the three heroes of the family of Taa, of which Sekenen-Ra is the first, very little is known, except that the war lasted many years, and ended (about B.C. 1703) in the final expulsion of the foreign (Hyksos) conquerors. It is therefore extremely interesting to learn that the mummy of Sekenen-Ra bears evidence of a violent death, the head and face being covered with wounds. The inference is, of course, that he died upon the field of battle.'*

After this king arises Seti I., whose mummy has also been found and unrolled, and photographs of whom can be seen in any shop-window. Then comes the great Rameses II. These

* *Academy*, July 24, 1886.

mummies* were found in a tomb at Thebes, long concealed; but in 1879 Maspero saw a tablet which had been got from an Arab, caused this Arab to be arrested, and after some time the secret hiding-place was divulged. The daring explorers were let down by ropes into a deep pit, where, in a chamber, they found boxes of statuettes, bronze and terra-cotta jars, alabaster vases and also in a chamber eighteen huge mummy-cases. There was Seti, 'who drew his frontiers where he pleased,' Rameses the Great and other Pharaohs of the Theban dynasties. Investigations gave the explanation as to why these mummies had been taken away from the royal tombs and placed in this obscure hiding-place. In the times of Rameses IX. tombs had been rifled, and others damaged. An inquiry was held, and some of the delinquents were brought to justice. The 'Abbott' and the 'Amhert' papyri give accounts of the proceedings in full, and the confession of one of the criminals. As disorders progressed in the kingdom, and the power of the monarchy declined, it appears to have been determined to move the royal remains from the royal tombs and place them in this concealed hole. And so it is that we in these days can look upon the face of that king 'who knew not Joseph,' and his predecessors and successors! The struggle Seti had with his enemies, and the character of his conquests, are shown on many a monument. At Thebes we see him represented with his mace, striking prisoners-of-war, a group of whom are kneeling before him; there is the negro with his woolly hair, ring in ear; the Assyrian with his long wig; undoubted Semitics and other races, all holding hand aloft, craving mercy. In the splendid ruins of Abydos we see this king again offering homage to his god, or triumphing over his enemies, all telling of war. And then Rameses II. The whole land of Egypt is

* See Appendix, 'History of Ancient Egyptian Art,' Perriot and Chipiez, vol. ii.

full of his doings. Was it likely so proud a king would tolerate in his midst and close to his most vulnerable frontier a subject nation, allied by blood to those Semitic Hyksos kings his ancestors had such fierce battles with? How politic his advice to his people was! (Exod. i. 9, 10):

'Behold the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come now, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass *that when there falleth out any war they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us*, and so get them up out of the land.' This was the 'cry' with which the astute king went to his people. 'The country is in danger!' He appeals to Egyptian patriotism, reminds them, too, of past trouble, and suggests that it might occur again. Politicians have never been at a loss for reasons when they wished to act unjustly. The wolf found that the lamb fouled the stream, though he did drink the water *below* the complainant! And yet Pharaoh had some truth on his side of the argument. All that was happening was in the controlling hand of God, though kings thought then, and think still, that *they* rule the world.

Acting, then, on the advice of Pharaoh, 'they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens.'

A study of the Egyptian monuments shows us well what that meant. The stick, the bastinado, had its native home in Egypt, and the barbarous way in which it was applied is shown on many temples. For some crimes as many as a thousand blows were ordered. And yet old authorities tell us that 'an Egyptian blushes if he cannot show numerous marks on his body that evince his endeavours to evade his duties.'* 'The bastinado was inflicted on both sexes.' In the Beni Hassan tombs we see a man held down on his face by two figures, another holding his heels, while an official rains blows on his naked back.

* 'Ammianus Marcellinus,' see Wilkinson, vol. ii., p. 211.

Another picture representation shows two boys—one being brought by the officer, stick in hand, before the master or steward ; another boy is appealing for mercy to an official, who is rejecting him. Also at Beni Hassan we see a woman bastinadoed on her back—women generally sat. In a tomb at the Pyramids we see a superintendent beating a workman, who, with another man, is polishing a slab of granite. At Thebes frequent pictures of the same punishment are to be seen. All Egyptian inscriptions tell the same story, and Egypt is unchanged. Those who witnessed the making of the Suez Canal saw the ant-like swarm of workmen—Fellahîn, taken by force from their villages—filling the baskets *with their hands*, then hurrying with their loads up the banks to shoot the rubbish ; or saw the Nile barges with the forced corvée coming from Nubia and the Soudan, the men packed like sardines in a box ; or, later on, saw those men working in the sugar-fields of the late Khedive—saw them with loads of cane on shoulder, hurried at a *trot* into the sugar-house, two living streams of men—one loaded, the other unloaded—and saw the task-masters with corbash or heavy thong in hand, standing at given distances on either line. And then, if from fatigue, or what not, the burden-carriers lagged, down on their naked backs came the lash ! I have seen men who had fainted and fallen down, merely dragged on one side, a bucket of Nile water dashed over them, and then left to recover or die. Or go and see at night the tired multitude (in one instance I saw 10,000) lying about in groups—no roof but the sky and the quiet stars, which look on a scene like a horrid battle-field. There lie figures contorted in the strangest manner, seeking rest for the poor weary body. A few groups are gathered round poor fires, trying to warm themselves, for, after the cruel toil of the day and the burning heat of an Egyptian sun, few have any cloaks or wraps to shelter them from the chill night-dews. Coughing

comes all around, and then ever and anon rises in the still air that strange pathetic song in the minor key, of some poor soul singing, 'Ya Ali! Ya Ali!' an invocation to a favourite saint.* See all this, and then you could the better realize what those terse words in the Bible meant: 'The Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: they made their lives bitter' (Exod i. 13, 14).

An amusing instance of the unchangeable nature of Egyptian habits and types is that remarkable figure carved out of sycamore-wood found by Marriette Pasha. It is now in the museum at Boulak. It was shown to me by the discoverer. It represents a high official of mature age and proud bearing, carrying in his hand his staff of office. The face expresses great determination. When the Fellâhîn who were digging for Marriette came upon it they with one voice shouted out, 'Sheikh-el Belad!' 'Here's our magistrate!' It is the exact type of that official of to-day.

We may take it as a settled fact that Rameses II. was 'the oppressor,' and we will therefore briefly examine some of the monuments of that king and his father, Seti I. Rameses I. reigned a very short time; but under Seti the empire waxed all-powerful, and his son, Rameses II., if possible, made the empire still greater. A few facts, taken almost at random, will enable us to better understand the verses (Exod. i. 12-14). On the north wall of the temple at Karnak we see Seti I. returning victorious from an expedition into Syria. He is in his chariot. Before him go long lines of captives of different types. Arms tied behind their backs, ropes round their necks, they are led on, to be stopped by a Suez Canal! Yes; Seti had ordered a canal to be made; full accounts of it are given, and the rejoicings on its opening.†

* In Palestine the common expression day or night from the people is 'Ya Allah!'—'Oh God!'

† The reader can see representations of all this in Wilkinson.

Priests and princes kneel by the side of the canal and offer the victorious king homage and gifts. An inscription on this interesting picture calls the canal the 'cut through.' Verily, there is nothing new under the sun! Another picture on the walls of Thebes is very interesting. Here are represented captives working in the brickfields. We see men going to the river to get the Nile mud. One figure is represented breast high in it, with his load on his shoulder. Then there is the great heap of mud on the land. Men are filling baskets with it, and carrying it away; while others are engaged with wooden frames pressing the mud into shapes, just as can be seen in a modern brickfield. The bricks made, men carry them away on boards. These boards are slung by a pole over the shoulders. Others are piling the soft bricks into heaps, allowing air-space between. Then, on the same wall, we see labourers engaged in building. Men are bringing loads on their backs, while others are stooping to work. But ever present, ever vigilant, stands the task-master with his rod, and the official with his lash! Sometimes the head official sits and looks on while the labourers work; but the lash always—even when the people represented are art workmen, and carving inscriptions or sphinxes—down comes the lash on their naked backs!*

It would take a volume to describe all these representations. Seti and his son, Rameses, were the great builders of all public works in Egypt. Not only, therefore, had the Israelites to build 'cities,' but there was 'all manner of service in the field' —canals, fortifications, temples, 'store cities' (R.V.). We may not be able to identify the Israelites in the pictures, but we see how those works were done. The eleventh verse specially mentions 'treasure cities,' 'Pithom and Raamses.' Here again we touch very firm ground, as we shall see later on; but we must follow the line of the Bible story.

* Ebers, 'Egypt,' vol. ii., p. 21.

Next comes the cruel edict of the jealous king: The male children are to be destroyed. To haughty conquerors such as Rameses, whom all the inscriptions delight in representing as trampling on his opponents, this would doubtless appear a very light thing. But the 'midwives fear God,' and evade the edict.

Here I cannot but relate what happened to me in the Desert of Sinai. I had been staying with a Bedawîn tribe. The favourite wife of the sheikh was ill. I had a considerable reputation as a Hakeem, or doctor, from some cures I had effected, and my own men always told the tale—with additions! I was 'medically consulted.' The affair was strange, because I was told I could not be allowed to see the afflicted woman; so I declined to act unless I saw her tongue! Eventually, in the presence of the midwife of the tribe, I was allowed, and fortunately saw what was the matter—a sharp touch of fever. I cured the woman, and the midwife, anxious probably to increase her own knowledge, became very friendly. She was a fearful old hag. One day, talking with her, I expressed my surprise at the few *female* children running about the tents, for the very young children were all in a state of nature. She told me Bedawîn women rarely had female children! Very strongly I told her she was not speaking the truth, and that she would not get the information she desired from me unless she did. After some time she then said: 'This happened.' The 'this' was an ugly motion of the thumb and finger, with a still uglier twist at her throat, which explained that the female babe was strangled! Too many women in the desert would doubtless be an encumbrance—another mouth to feed, and little food to be got. Was this a relic of old times?* I know not. But Pharaoh's order

* In Palestine at the present day there is great rejoicing when a son is born, but if a girl the opposite. Laurence Oliphant speaks of a woman pitching her child out of the window when she discovered it was a girl, and

was different. The *male* was then to be thrown into the river —the daughters saved: they would be useful as slaves or for the harem. Moses is born and put in the ark of bulrushes, and the compassionate princess saves his life. He grows up an Egyptian outwardly; but he had been taught by *his mother* (Exod. ii. 8) and doubtless taught the promises of God—told of the promised inheritance. Also, he was 'learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds' (Acts vii. 22). Yet his heart yearned for his suffering brethren. Up to this time he appears to have been living at Pharaoh's court—probably at Tanis, away from Goshen. But when forty years old he visited his brethren, and, seeing one suffer wrong, indignation overcame him, and he slew the oppressor. The story was told, and Moses had to fly. He fled to the 'land of Midian.' Why there? Egyptian inscriptions help us. He was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, so he would well know that it was useless to try to escape to Palestine by the 'way of the Philistines.' That was barred by the great wall and its garrisoned forts, and he, a fugitive, had no passport. The same reasons applied to the 'way of Shur.' That would lead him past those Egyptian colonies and mines in the Desert of Sinai, of which we shall have more to say. There was only one route possible—the 'way of the Red Sea.' He must have taken that, and, so escaping all danger, gets to the end of the Gulf of 'Akabah and into Midian, that land of which Captain Burton tells us in his 'Land of Midian.' He looks and is dressed as 'an Egyptian.' For did not the daughters of the priest think so? (Exod. ii. 19). He marries, and lives the life of a shepherd. How did he get that news of the twenty-third verse of the second chapter—'that the King of Egypt died'? In the fourth chapter, fourteenth verse, we are told

the poor thing was a cripple for life. He saw the child limping about, and on inquiries found the cause.

'Aaron cometh forth to meet thee' (Exod. iv. 14). So his brother in Egypt must have known of his abiding-place. Moses would be safe in Midian, for every bit of the Sinai Desert was well known to the Egyptians, and under their sway. But in Midian Moses was over their frontier.

The bondage of the children of Israel is made more bitter, and then 'they cry' unto God; and the ever-loving God 'had respect unto them' (Exod. ii. 23-25). Moses is given various proofs of God's power and gracious intentions towards Israel; and the man who modestly says he is 'not eloquent,' and 'slow of speech,' goes on his great mission. He must have been glad to get away from his shrew of a wife! Moses and Aaron return to Egypt, tell their mission to the 'elders'; all the 'people believed,' 'and worshipped.' The great leaders go before the new Pharaoh; his haughty answer is, 'Who is the Lord?' These Egyptian despots, in all their native inscriptions, assumed that title to themselves! The intervention of Moses only angered Pharaoh, and he ordered that the burden of the Israelites should be increased. Let us now see what modern discovery has to tell us of Pithom and Rameses. And here we must turn to those deeply interesting discoveries of the Egyptian Exploration Fund, a sister society to the Palestine Exploration Fund. The labours of the able explorers of the first-named society, Mr. W. M. Flinders Petrie and M. de Naville, like those of the Palestine Fund, wonderfully light up the pages of Scripture.*

They show how little the Delta is known, though the great traveller Lepsius did years ago suggest the true site of Pithom. Every traveller in Egypt has noticed the mounds about twelve miles from Ismaïlia, in Wâdy Tumilât; the Arabic name being Tell el Maskhûta ('the mound of the statue'), because a statue of Rameses II. was found there, sitting between the

* 'Pithom,' Egyptian Exploration Fund.

two solar gods, Ra and Tum. Near this mound, close to the earthworks thrown up by Arabi's soldiers, runs a work called by the Arabs 'The Canal of the Wâdy.' It is now a marsh, full of reeds; but it marks the site of that old canal of Seti of which I have spoken. Here, also, are remains of a thick wall, built of large bricks. M. de Naville then gives an account of the excavations. Amongst other things found was a square area, enclosed by enormous brick walls, containing a space of about 55,000 square yards. This space contained the ruins of a temple. The monumental inscriptions *were destroyed*. Then come strange buildings of thick walls of crude brick, joined by thin layers of mortar. The walls were well built, having a thickness of from two to three yards; the surface smooth. Many other chambers were found. These were the undoubted storehouses, or granaries, in which the Pharaohs stored the provisions necessary for armies about to cross the desert. They were border forts. The Hebrew translation in our version, 'treasure cities,' should be 'storehouses.' The Septuagint calls them 'fortified cities.' Inscriptions found prove undoubtedly that these 'cities' were built by Rameses II.—the Pharaoh of the oppression. Now, the city is called in the Bible 'Pithom.' The Egyptian words are Pi Tum—'the city or abode of Tum.' Now, 'Tum' was one of the solar gods worshipped by the king; so in this case he calls the 'city,' or storehouse, by the name of his god!

Many most valuable objects and inscriptions were found—one, for instance, a portion of a sphinx. There is a fragment of an inscription:

'The Lord of Theku, of Succoth.'

This name occurs again. A portion of another inscription reads:

'His obedient son has dedicated to his father Pithom, the abode of the festivals of the king—the divine offspring of Ra.'

Another:

'The first prince of Sept, the Lord of the East, the head of the prophets of Tum—the great god of Succoth,' etc.

This 'Sept' is often called the 'Lord of the East.' A longer inscription reads (it is to King Rameses):

'I am pleased with what thou hast done, my son who loves me! I know thee; I love thee; I am thy father. I give thee everlasting joy and an eternal reign. Thy duration is like my duration on my throne on earth. Thy years are like the years of Tum. Thou risest like the god of the two horizons, and thou illuminest the land. Thy sword protects Egypt; thou enlargest thy frontiers. All the prisoners made by thy gallant sword are brought to Egypt from Syria, from Ethiopia, from the Tahennu, from the Shasu,* from the islands of the sea. King Rameses—living eternally.'

Was it likely that kings vaunted like this would think much of the treatment of a nation of shepherds—a helpless crowd, with no political power or leaders?

M. Naville carries his proofs further. He found a fragment on which was written, 'The good Recorder of Pithom' (Pi Tum). This fragment has been brought to England. And now mark another discovery. Speaking of the bricks of which the huge 'storehouse' is built, he says:

'Many of them are made with straw, or with *fragments of reeds*, of which traces are still to be seen; and some are of *Nile mud*, without any *straw at all*.'†

What is the meaning of 'no straw,' of these 'fragments of reeds'? We must go back to the Bible again, and see how Pharaoh orders that the people are to have 'no straw' given to them; they are to gather it themselves. Yet they are to make the same quantity of bricks. 'The taskmasters hated them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw.' We have seen what those task-masters were in the Egyptian inscriptions, and we may be sure they did not

* Bedawîn.

† 'Pithom,' M. Naville.

spare the stick; for we read 'they were beaten.' 'The officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh,' and tell of the oppression, and speak of the cruel conduct. The despot tells them: 'Ye are idle, ye are idle.' He sneers at their religion, and their condition is made worse.

Let us look more closely into the meaning of the words 'straw' and 'stubble.'

The Hebrew word translated 'straw' means '*crushed* or broken straw,'* like our chopped hay. The 'straw' in its natural state has another Hebrew word, which in our version is called 'stubble.'

Now, crushed straw was the only kind used in brick-making. Major Conder shows how even *now* it is so used in Palestine. 'The bricks are made in spring by bringing down water into ditches dug in the clay, when chopped straw is mixed with the mud; thence the soft mixture is carried in bowls to a row of wooden moulds or frames, each about ten inches long by three inches across. These are laid out on flat ground, and are squeezed full, the clay being then left to harden in the sun.' This is a most accurate picture of the way bricks were made in the times of the Pharaohs, as is shown by the inscriptions.

Really one can see in the Egypt of to-day something of what must have happened when the children of Israel 'were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw' (R.V., Exod. v. 12), for some of the very poorest of the huts in which the Fellahîn live are made of Nile mud, mixed with fragments of straw, of rush, grass, bits of stick, anything to bind the mud together. These modern 'bricks' are like flat cakes; they are dried in the sun on the

* '"Crushed straw" is called "Tibn" in Arabic; it is not broken or cut by any implement, but broken by the oxen treading out the corn; it can in Palestine be had all the year round, as it is stored up in dry cisterns, and then a pile of loose stones is erected over the mouth. Horses are fed on Tibn and barley mixed.'—Note by Mr. G. Armstrong.

rubbish-heaps outside the villages. Children, women, men, may be seen collecting these scraps of straw; so also every particle of cattle dung is collected, mixed with these fragmentary bits of straw or stick, dried in the sun, and used for fuel.

Again, in the sluggish waters of the Delta rushes of every kind flourished; for it was here that the papyrus grew, and still grows, and not in that rapid Nile at Cairo, of which travellers speak when they express their surprise that no papyrus grows now.*

The photographs taken by M. Naville for the Egyptian Fund show brick chambers of a huge size—in the lowest course the bricks are well made; in the higher courses, rough straw and rushes in the bricks; last courses, neither! What a confirmation of the Bible history! (See Exod. v. 7-19.)

We have seen that the Pharaoh Rameses II., who ordered the death of the male children, and from whom Moses fled, was dead—that his successor still further increased their burdens by carrying on the great works in brick which his father had commenced. Do the Egyptian monuments tell us anything of him—this hard son of a hard father? His name is Meneptah.

Brugsch Bey gives one record of him, and it furnishes a striking proof of the manner in which the nomads (that is, those who were sons of the desert; Bedawîn, as we call them; 'Shasu' they are called by the Egyptian scribes) sought sustenance for themselves and their cattle in the rich pastures of Egypt. The papyrus is a report from a high Egyptian official to the king:

'Another matter for the satisfaction of my master's heart.

* 'Papyrus still grows in the Jordan Valley, on the coast near Sidon, in the Zerka.'—Major Conder. It is a great mistake for writers to say the plant is now extinct. I have found it in the Sinai desert.—H. A. H.

We have carried into effect the passage of the tribes of the Shasu from the land of Aduma (Edom), through the fortress of Mineptah Hotephima, which is situated in Thuku, to the lakes of the city Pi-tum of Mineptah Hotephima, which are situated in the land of Thuku, in order to feed themselves and their herds on the possessions of Pharaoh, who is there a beneficent sun for all peoples.'

This sort of immigration was what had alarmed Rameses, 'lest they' (the Israelites) 'join also unto our enemies and fight against us' (Exod. i. 10).

The 'Thuku' mentioned in this writing is by Brugsch Bey translated 'Succoth.' M. Naville* considers the region this tribe was allowed to occupy is 'Etham.' It is called by various names in the papyri. He shows that these immigrants were allowed to occupy some of the good pasture assigned to the Israelites, and that the signs used prove it to have been a border land, which agrees with what is said of 'Etham'—that it was '*in the edge of the wilderness.*' 'Etham was a region, not a city,' for we read of 'the *wilderness* of Etham' in Numb. xxxiii. 8. The papyri call it 'the land of Atuma,' and it was occupied by nomads (Bedawîn) of Semitic race.

The question now arises, Where was Pharaoh when Moses and Aaron had their various interviews with him? Writers on this subject have made many suggestions, but the Bible is clear. If we turn to Psalm lxxviii. 8, we find it written: 'Marvellous things did He in the sight of their fathers in the land of Egypt, in *the field of Zoan.*' Now, this was where Pharaoh was holding his court, a distance of about thirty miles from Goshen. This was, therefore, the distance Moses and Aaron had to traverse. Egyptian records show that the Pharaohs often resided there, especially when they had affairs of state in hand with the Semitic peoples in the Delta. At the

* See Reports to Egyptian Exploration Fund.

time in question the disaffection* of the Hebrews was in itself a good reason for the royal residence being fixed at this place.

Of the present state of Tanis, Dr. Ebers remarks :†

'Many of the remains of the cities and temples that have come down to us from the period of Egypt's splendour are of greater extent and in better preservation, but no ruins excel these in picturesque charm. . . . The city must have been a large one, and one of the most splendid residences and centres of culture in the kingdom. Only in Thebes are there so many and such large monuments of hard granite to be found; but of all the magnificent buildings which once stood here, not even the ground-plan can be recognised. The great sanctuary erected by Rameses II., Pharaoh the Oppressor, has crumbled into dust. Granite pillars with palm-leaf capitals, colossi, and no less than twelve broken obelisks, lie by the side of less important monuments in grand confusion on the earth. An Arabic legend relates that the Pharaohs were giants, who could move the mightiest masses of rock with a magic rod; but if it needed giants to erect these monuments, it must have required the will and the strength of a god thus to overthrow them.'

Such is the present state of that city in which the haughty

* 'In certain papyri of the eighth year of Meneptah one contains a letter written by an Egyptian in Syria to a friend at Rameses; it runs :

'"At the moment of writing, I am alive and well, so do not be anxious about me; but I want to hear the news as to your welfare every day; and I may add that I expect very soon to rejoin you at Pa Rameses. Meramen."

'An undertone of apprehension pervades these lines, which is stated plainly in another communication :

'"Such is the state of affairs with us to-day, but no one knows what will happen to-morrow."'—*Century Magazine*, September, 1889, p. 713.

'We see by this that the ferment among the Hebrews was exciting anxiety in the minds of the Egyptian people. They saw that the Hebrews were about "to strike."'

† 'Egypt,' i., p. 97.

Pharaoh received the messengers from God. It was a favourite residence of his father, Rameses II., for he had so many wars on that frontier with Semitics. Dr. Ebers says:

'Venerable papyrus-rolls contain the accounts of the task-masters of the Hebrews, as rendered to the overseers, and show us how unremittingly the officers watched the labourers, and endeavoured to promote their material comfort. The officials praise the neighbourhood of Tanis and the fertility of Goshen in words of rapture.' Pictures at Thebes have already shown us how bricks were made, and the inscription tells us these prisoners were 'to make bricks for the new buildings of the provision-houses or granaries of the city of Amon.' By the side of the second picture it is written, 'Prisoners brought by his majesty to labour at the temple of his father Amon.' A third inscription celebrates the vigilance of the task-masters, and the gods are entreated to reward the king, for remembering them, with wine and good food. An overseer calls out to the people, 'I carry the stick; be ye not idle!' 'It is impossible to study these pictures without thinking of the oppression of the Hebrews.' The cry of the overseer is but the echo of Pharaoh's words, 'Ye are idle! ye are idle!'*

The king refuses to let the people go. Plagues follow, the last, when 'there was a great cry in Egypt,' for all the firstborn were smitten with death. Now in haste Pharaoh urges them to go; the Egyptians also, 'for they said, We be all dead men.' The dough is taken without being leavened; the Israelites borrow† 'jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment,' and the huge array of captives set off, 'from Rameses to Succoth' (Exod. xi.). Not only the Hebrews, but a mixed multitude—'flocks and herds, and very much cattle.'

'The host hurried on to the eastward, executing, apparently,

* Ebers' 'Egypt,' i., p. 103.

† R.V. reads 'asked.'

in one day a march of twelve to fifteen miles. They reach the district of Succoth, and camp within its limits, to the west of

THE 'EDGE' OF THE DESERT.

Pithom. There is no more likely place for this encampment than the neighbourhood of Kassassin, where there is abundance

of forage and water. . . . Meeting with no molestation or pursuit, they continued their march on the following day, and encamped at Etham, at the eastern end of Wâdy Tumilât. . . . So the route of the Israelites must have been near the present town of Ismaîlia, at the head of Lake Timsah.' Here the desert presents, in consequence of its slight elevation above the bottom of the wâdy, a better defined 'edge.'*

It is just here where the land route to Palestine begins, and was so used as a route by the Bedawîn before the days of the present Suez Canal. We must not forget that the chariot corps —'crême de la crême' of the Egyptian army—was stationed at Tanis; it could there the better guard the frontier. But a new command comes from the Lord God: that the array was to 'turn.' They had been told not to go 'the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent *when they see war*' (Exod. xiii. 17). Had they gone that direct route, they must have '*seen war*,' and plenty of it, too, for the chariot corps would have been well on their flank, and in their front the great fortified wall;† and, moreover, Philistia at this time was under the sway of Egypt. None but a powerful array of trained soldiers could have had any hope of cutting their way through all these warlike forces of the enemy, and the Israelites were a frightened mob of captives, just liberated from hard bondage, with coward minds and frightened hearts. This 'turn' gave Pharaoh courage. He thought they were 'entangled in the land,' and here I will quote what I have previously written on this part of

* Sir J. W. Dawson, 'Egypt and Syria,' p. 59.

† Poole, 'Cities of Egypt,' p. 66, says: 'There stood on the eastern border of Egypt from the days of Abraham the fortresses carefully constructed on principles we are pleased in our ignorance to call modern, with scarp and counter-scarp, ditch and glacis well manned by the best troops, the sentinel on the ramparts day and night.'

the subject, for, on re-examination of the whole route, I see no reason to alter it:*

'They now marched to encamp before "Pi-hahiroth," between Migdol and the sea *over* against "Baal-Zephon." "Pi-hahiroth" means "edge of the sedge," or "where sedge grows"; Baal-Zephon, "the Lord of the North." This latter was *across* the sea, and probably the high peaks of "Jebel Muksheih"† were in view. But have we any reason to believe that the "Red Sea" extended in those days as far as "Lake Timsah"? Yes, plenty of proof. Egyptian records show how at that time the "sea" extended to that place. They tell how a canal was made to connect the Nile with that sea, and give an account of the rejoicings on the opening of the canal. The "sea" has retreated owing to the elevation of the land. Proofs are in plenty from recent geological surveys, and now we can understand with a clearer eye what the prophet Isaiah means when he says (chap. xi. 15): "And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian Sea, and with His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod." "Egyptian Sea"—it could never have meant that which now ends at Suez, but one which all records prove extended to Lake Timsah. Sluggish, yes; for it was "weedy" or "reedy." And here let me say there is no warrant, according to the best scholars, in calling the sea in question "Red Sea." The Hebrew words are clear, and mean "sea of reeds" or "sea of weeds," when they describe the "sea" the Israelites crossed. This, again, is a most powerful confirmation of the view that at one time the present Gulf of Suez extended to Lake Timsah.'

Pharaoh thought that, hemmed in by that 'sea,' the Israelites would be at his mercy; so he makes 'ready his

* 'Goshen to Sinai,' *Sunday Magazine*.

† Jebel Muksheih is the prominent northern point of the Jebel er Rabah.

chariot,' and takes his chariot guard—600 chosen chariots—'and pursued after the children of Israel.' He overtakes the multitude, who see their danger: the desert towards Jebel Attaka, with its steep cliffs, in front; the 'sea' on their left hand. They murmur at Moses, 'Were there no graves in Egypt?' They remind him of their fears, their cowardly fears: 'It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness!' The pursuit continued, for 'Pharaoh drew nigh'; but the Lord orders that the people 'go forward,' and the promise is that they shall cross the sea on 'dry ground.' The host of Israel is led by a 'pillar of fire' by night, a 'pillar of cloud' by day. Eastern armies have from time immemorial been led by 'cressets' of fire at night; Alexander so led his troops. The Mecca caravan of to-day is led by 'cressets' of fire borne aloft. This is now done to escape the heat of the sun. But the pillar of cloud was now in the *rear* (Exod. xiv. 19) of the Israelites, showing its bright face to them, but darkness to the Egyptians. So those troops still pursuing would be as if in a fog; they would dimly see the fugitives moving on, but be ignorant of their own exact position. They, in the darkness caused by the cloud,* would not see the waters. The Egyptian host is 'troubled,' and, as old versions of the Bible read, 'their chariot wheels were bound,' or 'made them to drive heavily.' Yes, because the wind which had caused the sea to go back was changing by a miracle. So the water, percolating through the sand, would make the whole a quicksand; and 'when the morning appeared' the Egyptians saw their dangerous position, tried to fly—it was too late! they were all swallowed up;† and 'Israel saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians.'

* 'It was a cloud and darkness to them' (Exod. xiv. 20).

† Professor Sayce ('Fresh Light,' p. 63) says Pharaoh did not perish, and that he was alive three years later.

'Egyptian records tell us that at this time the then Pharaoh had had to meet a serious invasion of Libyans and other peoples on the west.' This is probably why he had so weakened his garrisons at Tanis that he only had the chariot corps.

I have already spoken of the great discovery of royal mummies, and told how Seti, Rameses and many other royal bodies have been found. The mummy of Meneptah is missing! Though no mummy of Meneptah is found yet, in the Boulak Museum we can look upon his sculptured face, which, if the artist does not belie him, shows him to have been a weak, irresolute man, such as the Bible narrative suggests—puffed up by his grandeur; for he wears on his head a double crown, that for Upper and Lower Egypt.* One thing is,

* Since this book was written the well-known American writer, John A. Pain, has written a most valuable article in *The Century* magazine for September, 1889, in which he shows from many Egyptian inscriptions that the records do tell of the sudden death of the eldest son of the then reigning Pharaoh. So true is it that new facts are being brought to light every day, and every added fact goes to prove the extreme accuracy of the Biblical account.

He relates how Meneptah came to the throne when an old man; that he then had a son of his old age. This son when eighteen years of age he associated with himself in the government of the land. The tomb of this son has been discovered at Thebes—*unfinished*. Many inscriptions speak of the decease of this son. At Gebel Silsilsis some tablets represent the royal group; one shows the king Meneptah offering an image. The inscription below relates:

'The Heir to the throne of the whole land, the Royal Scribe, the Chief of the Soldiers, the great Royal Son of the body begotten, beloved of him (Set), Mer-en-ptah—DECEASED.'

On a statue of Rameses occurs this inscription:

'All life—permanence—purity—health—to the Heir to the Throne—over the two lands—the Royal Scribe—the Chief of the Soldiers—great Royal Son—the sam . . .

Mer-en-ptah—DECEASED.'

however, clear from the monuments—that it was long ere any Egyptian expeditions across the border were undertaken ; and this in itself would imply that the empire was weakened from some cause known to the Egyptians, and which they wished to conceal. Those best able to judge say that the explorations in the Delta, Tanis, and other towns, have as yet only touched the fringe of possible discovery.

It is an interesting fact that Zoan, the Tanis of Pharaoh, was built seven years after Hebron, and from its name must have

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Another :

'All victory and might to the Heir to the Throne—the Royal Son, Mer-en-ptah—DECEASED.'

On the side of a statue of Meneptah occurs this remarkable inscription :

'He who governed
Egypt
in behalf of his
father
Setî—Meneptah DE
CEASED.'

Compare this with the Bible statement :

'The Lord smote
the first-born of
Pharaoh
that sat on his
throne.'

Other inscriptions, too numerous to quote here, all tell the same story. 'The broken-hearted father ever afterwards exhibited a weakness, a want of energy ; blinded by the shadow of death, bleeding from his fresh wound of bereavement, though frenzied with rage against those who had brought calamity on him, he made ready his chariot and all the chariots of Egypt and pursued after escaping Israel.'

'It is often asserted that the Egyptians naturally would not confess a misfortune, and that their antiquities afford no trace of the first-born son of Pharaoh, brought low under the last of those ten judgments which liberated Israel. . . . May this not be due rather to our dulness of vision? Is not their ingenuous testimony on record, and waiting only for our unerring discernment?'

been built by Semitics. No trace of 'Zoan' exists; Tanis was built over it, and city after city has been built over the ruins of that. We also see that 'Hyksos inscriptions on sphinxes are always in a line down the right shoulder, never on the left. This honouring of the right shoulders by Semitics was followed by the Jews'; the Egyptians, on the contrary, when they wished to show honour, inscribed on the left shoulder; but they were usually indifferent.

It will be seen that we totally disagree with those theories which would make the Israelites cross the Gulf of Suez. To my mind the whole of that theory is unsound; contrary to the position assigned in the Bible to the land of Goshen; entirely destroyed by M. Naville's discovery of Pithom, which sets all doubt at rest. Theologians had read Josephus, and, misled by the Letopolis which he speaks of, thought it meant Heliopolis, near Cairo. Hampered by this vital mistake, they overlooked the Bible statements as to Zoan and Goshen, and have led the world astray. The Israelites had crossed by a miracle, and then 'went three days in the wilderness and found no water.' Had they crossed at Suez, three hours would have taken the host to the 'Wells of Moses'; but crossing about Lake Timsah, they would have to go 'three days' before they could reach that oasis.

Why should it be thought necessary that Pharaoh and his host descended a steep bank into a fearful chasm? His chariot-wheels could not have driven down it, and it was really when they 'drove heavily' that the soldiers found out where they were, and turned to fly. Had the Bible been read more closely, this popular idea of Suez would never have gained credence.

Let us examine the oasis—called by Europeans 'The Wells of Moses.' They are not 'wells,' but 'springs.' The Arabic ''Ayûn Mûsa'—'Springs of Moses'—is a true definition.

There are seventeen pools, or 'ponds'; but 'about a dozen perennial springs of various sizes rise through the soil, some into rudely-walled wells, others into wide pools or basins, and furnish a tolerable abundance of somewhat brackish, yet fairly palatable water, that from the larger springs being the least impure. There are also a few small water-holes of little or no use for drinking purposes.' Water from each well was examined by the Ordnance Survey party.* The largest spring 'contained a small deposit of bog iron ore,' 'saltish, and also bitter, too strong for use.' Water from the other 'springs' fairly good. There is never any lack of supply, and before the days of the 'Sweet-water Canal' to Suez, that town depended chiefly for its supply of 'sweet water' on 'Ayûn Mûsa.' It will here be well to notice how Europeans have ever described water. 'Sweet water' means our 'fresh water,' or drinkable water; 'living water' our 'spring water'; 'bitter water' our 'brackish' water.

Before we leave these springs let us sum up what the recent Biblical gains have been. The true starting-point of the Exodus, with the city of Pithom, has been found. Then, also, that the Hebrew words translated in the Authorised Version do not mean 'Red Sea,' but 'Sea of Reeds.' Also we have found that 'the tongue of the Egyptian Sea' at the time of the Exodus extended to the present Lake Timsah; that owing to the elevation of the ground that 'sea' 'dried up,' and left lakes of brackish water, through which the present Suez Canal runs; that the Israelites crossed 'the Sea of Reeds' somewhere near Lake Timsah, and then went 'three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah' (Numb. xxxiii. 8). They had come to Marah, and find the 'waters of Marah' bitter. We *have seen that these* '*Mûsa*' springs *are* '*bitter*,' *that they* have a *deposit of bog iron ore in some*, and *others are*

* Ordnance Survey of Sinai.

'*brackish*.' Trees grow at this oasis; but what the tree was that God ordered Moses to cast into 'the waters' (Exod. xv. 25), of that we have no clue.

Now Exodus calls the wilderness into which the people went after crossing by the miracle the 'wilderness of Shur,' whereas Numbers calls it the 'wilderness of Etham.' Is there a contradiction here? No. '*Etham is another name for the great wall of Egypt.* Dr. Ebers was the first to catch a glimpse of this truth. Both Ebers and Brugsch show that the Etham of the Hebrew text is identical with the Khetam of the Egyptian monuments. The word is a common name for "fortress" or "closure." Brugsch shows that the "Egyptian texts" speak only of towns and forts *on the frontier*. Hence the Khetam of Zor is the border, barrier, or closure of Mazor, toward the Eastern desert, or, as the Hebrews would designate it, the "Etham which is in (or at) the edge of the wilderness." Many papyri refer to these fortifications. Brugsch gives one: A father writes of his son's recall to the boundary of his own land (when the son had started out, like Sancha, beyond "the frontier wall which the king had made to keep off the Saki"). "My son, who was on his way to Phœnicia, I have caused to return towards the Khetamu" ("the fortifications") "with his companions to *re-enter* Egypt.'

'When Seti I. returned to Egypt after his campaign in the north and east, he is shown passing through the open gates of the fortifications, and crosses the bridge which spans the great canal, where he is welcomed by the priests and princes. The inscriptions show that he is passing the famous "Khetam of Zor," the border barrier of Mazor. Ebers remarks, "This Karnak inscription is of the greatest significance and importance."* Inscriptions too numerous to mention tell the same

* See Ebers' 'Egypt,' vol. ii., pp. 19-21, where bas-relief of Seti and Canal is given.

story. It is not without interest that we find that the cry of the people to Rameses is, "May he live for ever." Here is the "God save the King" of 1 Sam. x. 24, and which is echoed in every land of a king to-day.'

'The Egyptians called this border barrier indifferently by their own name Anboo, or Khetamoo, the wall or the fortifications. The Hebrews called it indifferently by their own pure Hebrew name, "Shur (the wall) which is before Egypt," and by the Hebraized Egyptian name, "Etham (the fortifications) at the edge of the wilderness." Naturally, therefore, the desert which was just beyond the great wall was known to the Hebrews indifferently as "the wilderness of Shur" or "the wilderness of Etham."'*

The recent discoveries I have glanced at enable us to clear away a host of mistakes. The radical error of all writers on the Desert of Sinai has been, that they were influenced by the idea of the Israelites crossing at Suez. This hampered them so that no account of the desert and its oases, as we find them, could be made to fit in with the sacred text. This gave a loophole for so much cavil and doubt.

The Israelites are about to plunge into the desert. What are its general features? Do we get any help from the Bible? The Bible is almost silent as to the *mountain* character of the Sinai Desert. Exod. xxxii. 12 does speak of 'the mountains,' and when Elijah fled into the desert (1 Kings xix. 11) we are told that 'a great and strong wind rent the *mountains* and brake in pieces the *rocks* before the Lord.' In Psalm cxiv. 4 we read, 'The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.' The Bible does speak of the 'great and terrible wilderness'; but that does not explain the mountainous character. So it will be well to explain that Sinai Desert is chiefly a mountain district. This fact alone would

* Dr. Trumbull.

be enough to frighten the Israelites, accustomed as they were to the flat land of the Delta, for none of those people had seen Palestine.

The popular idea of the desert may be stated thus: 'Yellow sand, green palm-trees, blue sky.' It is, moreover, thought that the desert is 'flat.' Really, there is very little sand; the palm-trees grow in the oases, and the land is not flat! Even where sand exists, it is rarely yellow, chiefly gray or white. The Desert of Shur, on which the Israelites had now entered, is a rolling plain—a 'raised beach' near the sea, then a gravelly tract dotted with ridges and hillocks of drifted sands. Low terraces and knolls, shrubs and herbs, dot the expanse and give pasturage to the camels of the Bedawîn. Watercourses—dry in summer—cross the plain from the Tîh range to the sea. They are called 'wâdies' by the Arabs. These 'watercourses' are often more than a mile across. Wâdy Sudur—the first great wâdy you pass—is much dreaded by the Arabs. I found it very difficult to get them to camp here. I wanted to sketch. The Arabs dread floods, for if a sudden storm breaks over the Tîh range, the water rushes down with great force, to lose itself in the sea, on your right hand. The fragments of palms and water-worn boulders show how frequent these floods are. The Rev. F. Holland on one occasion had to ford Wâdy Sudur knee-deep, and large tracts of ground are often submerged. When I crossed, the mud in the bed of the stream was wet, and the camels slipped very much. It was here that Professor Palmer, Captain Gill and Lieutenant Charrington were murdered by Arabi's adherents. The route across this desert plain is well marked by a score or more of parallel trails. These trails dwindle as they approach the raised terraces, and cross the wâdy by one or two gaps. All the travelling hereabouts is easy. Somewhere on these trails the Israelites must have passed. Wâdy Sudur is about

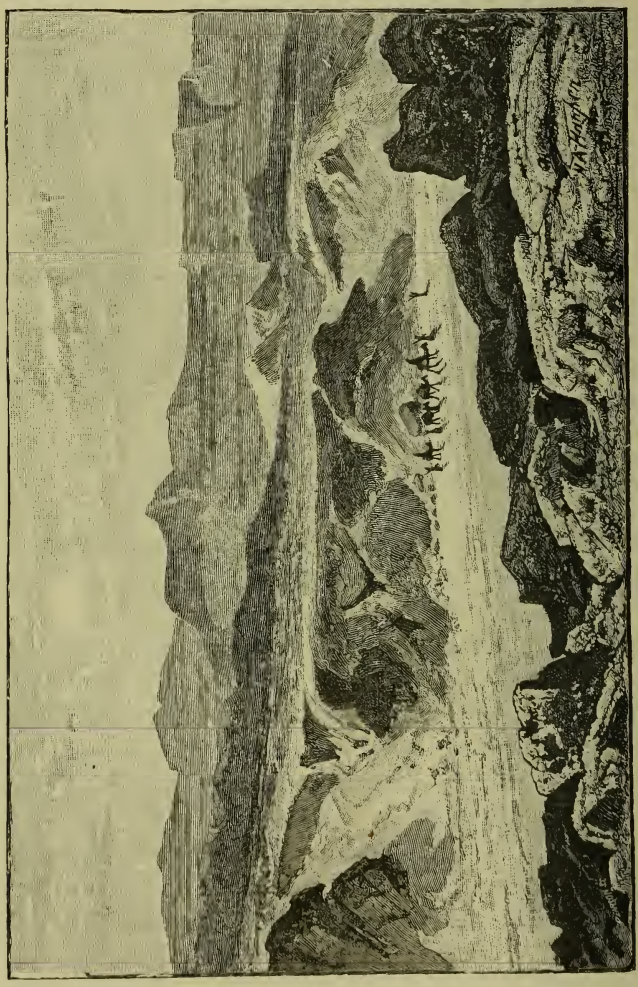
twenty miles from ''Ayûn Mûsa.' Though the bushes and shrubs are frequent, yet the general character of the ground is stone or pebbles, worn smooth by the driving of the sand during the 'sand' storms, or 'gravel' storms, which are so frequent in this region, and so much dreaded by Arabs and travellers, for it is not possible to get shelter. It was my lot to be caught in a very bad one on this plain. I will quote again my own remarks:

'A bright morning with high wind, cold, soon passing into a gale. Dark clouds like the darkest thunder-storm coming up with the wind. The frightened camels refuse to proceed, so they are made to kneel down, and their legs are securely tied together. They groan and roar with fright. We lie down, covering mouth and nostrils. The darkness increases; flash after flash of lightning tears down. I hear no thunder. There is no rain. The whole air is full of fine sand, while the desert looks like a sea of gravel and sand torn up by the fury of the wind, which is now hot. Hours pass. I note, and make rapid sketches as well as I can; but feeling as if death is very close. The figures of men and camels are almost covered. Some poor beast, in its agony, breaks a rope and struggles to its feet: we are forced to pull it down again. Night comes on; the storm continues. About three o'clock next day all is ended—peace reigns, a sweet rainbow spans the sky. With weary, exhausted bodies, we set ourselves to collect our belongings, to eat some bread, and drink water which is full of fine sand. Sand has got into everything.'*

Did the Israelites know the 'Khamseen'? Yes, for it is common enough in the Delta. The trail goes on: we cross Wâdy Werdan, a broad wâdy like Sudur, with water-worn boulders, but a dry bed. Then the valley closes in. The ground is broken up by low hills on either side, and there is

* *Sunday Magazine.*

a sort of broad pass, in which there are two or three stunted palms and two shallow pools of undrinkable water—it is rare



THE BROAD PASS NEAR 'AIN HAWARAH.

to find water in these pools, though they are called ''Ain Hawarah.' The host must have passed here, as the nature of

the ground proves. Writers hampered by the Suez theory have thought ''Ain Hawarah' was the 'Marah.' As I have sufficiently shown, it won't fit in with a single part of the Bible story. On to Elim the host of the Israelites go. In the Authorised Version it is said, 'There were twelve wells of water'; the Revised Version more properly translates the word into 'springs.' In Wâdy Gharândel, the 'Elim,' which we now reach, the valley is well defined, and when I was there on two occasions I found a delightful stream of water running through it—the stream small, but fed by springs, many of which I found out some distance up the wâdy. The water was good. There are bushes in plenty, and groups of the stunted palms of the desert. Birds sang in the bushes, and low down the glen there were pools, like as in a Scotch burn, where the water dashed and rippled over the stones; festoons of forget-me-nots and masses of maidenhair fern hung on the banks; water-fowl rose from some of the pools, which led on into a jungle of rank growth and marshy ground ere the stream fell into the sea. This, I think, must be the 'Elim' where the 'three score and ten palm-trees'* grew. We find from the text that the Israelites stayed here a month (see Exod. xvi. 1). In this wâdy, and on the slopes of the hills about, there is pasture, and the people would get some needed rest after all the excitements they had gone through. The account in Exodus also says: 'They encamped there by the waters.' It seems to me there is a meaning in the 'encamped' which marks a longer stay than the word 'pitched.' Bedawîn still often 'camp' at a place for months, while the pasture and water holds out. The word 'pitched,' I take it, means a shorter stay. Some writers suggest that the next camp—that by the 'Red Sea'—was that the Israelites went straight on

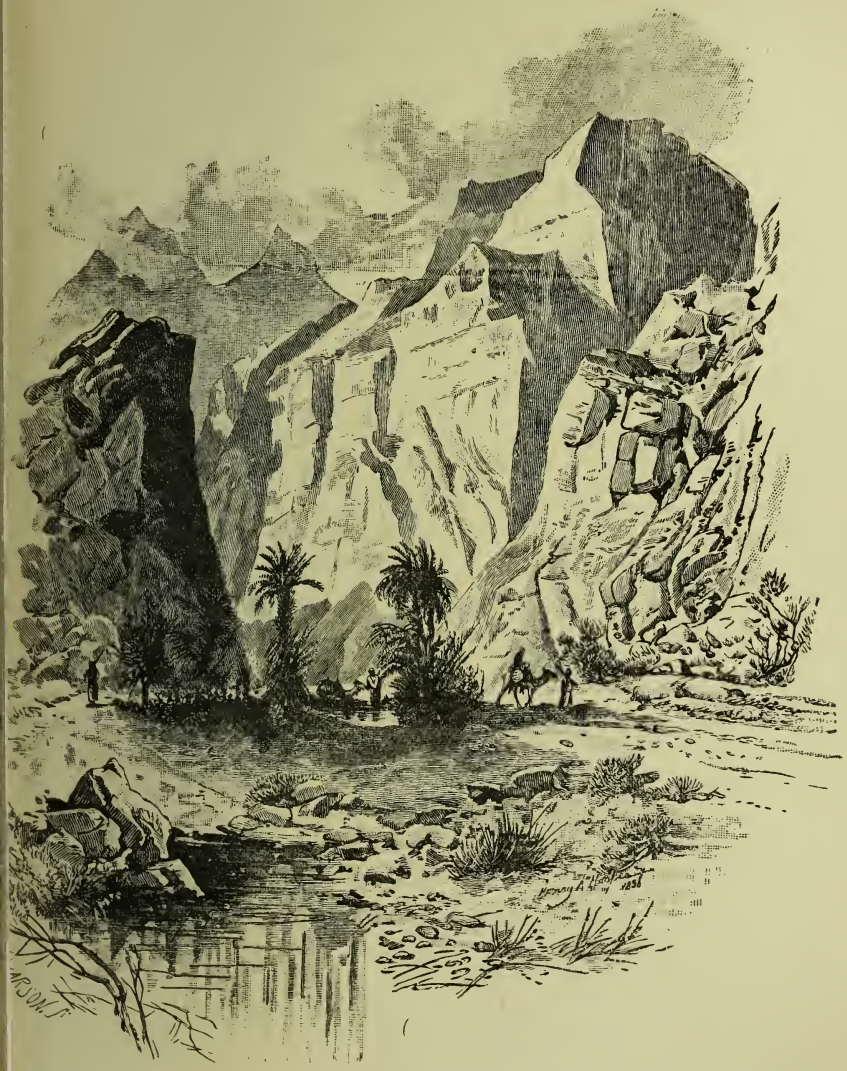
* How rare palm-trees were in this desert when the Israelites crossed we see by their counting them at 'Elim.'

down Wâdy Gharandel to the sea. If so, then their march would be over the tangled jungle I have spoken of to reach a beach, where there is no room, and where the waves often dash at the base of the great hill called by the Arabs Jebel Hammâm Farûn, from which issue the hot springs called the 'Baths of Pharaoh.' There is no road or track of any kind possible.

'It is just possible for an active man to clamber along the fallen *débris* at the foot of the cliffs,'* so this suggested route may be dismissed as impossible.

So we will cross the stream and take what is really the *main* track to Sinai. We cross, then, the Plain of el Gargah, and reach Wâdy Useit, about six miles from Gharandel, a broad valley, with a few palms and bushes, and three small brackish springs. Very seldom do Bedawîn drink this, as the good water of Gharandel is so near. Many writers have sought to identify 'Useit' with the Elim of the Bible. I cannot bring myself to believe Moses would leave such a fine oasis as Gharandel for the poor pools of Useit. This wâdy does run to the sea, but at some distance down is quite impassable to camels, and quite impassable for a host. We may dismiss that as a route for the Israelites. Then, seven miles further on, another wâdy, also running to the sea—a wild gorge, equally impassable to camels and difficult for a pedestrian. That may be dismissed. The scenery here is very grand, though the hills are wild and strange in form. Now we come to Wâdy Shebeikeh (the 'valley of the net'), a labyrinth of cliffs, often quite vertical, but splendid scenery for an artist. Now we come to a most critical point. It is, I think, quite evident that hitherto we may be sure we have been on the route of the Israelites; but now the road or track divides, one going straight on, the other turning. The straight track goes through Wâdy

* Reports of Sinai Expedition, Ordnance Survey.



WÂDY TAIYIBEH.

Hamr, the other down Wâdy Taiyibeh. Which did the Israelites take?

Here the Bible helps us most completely. In Numb. xxxiii. 10 we read: 'And they journeyed from Elim, and pitched by the Red Sea.' So down Wâdy Taiyibeh they *must* have gone, as we have shown already. The other wâdies are impassable, and Wâdy Taiyibeh is broad and open. This verse in Numbers is most invaluable. Had critics, who have sought to throw doubt on the Bible narrative, *known the country*, they would not have sneered at the 'ignorance of Moses,' they, forsooth, being so much wiser than the divinely-inspired leader! But why did Moses take the lower route? For the best of all reasons. The main route (which the Bible shows he did *not* take) leads to Wâdy Nasb, Serabît-el-Khâdim, and Maghara. What if it did? Why, there were the well-known mines, colonized and worked by Egyptians, held by garrisons of soldiers, with strong positions and passes! And so Moses, 'skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians,' evades all this mining country—turns the flank of it, so to speak—and, leading the host to the Red Sea, puts a mountain barrier between the coward host and the Egyptian garrisons and miners!

This single fact, gained from a knowledge of the country and the statements of the Bible, entirely destroys the elaborate argument of those who say, when speaking of these mines at Serâbit-el-Khâdim and Maghara, and the impossibility of passing them, that 'the unprejudiced will see in it (the existence of these Egyptian mines) another proof that the peninsula was never visited by the departing Israelites!'*

I think I am right when I say that the writer of these words has never himself visited the Sinai Desert, and he cannot have noticed the passage in Numb. xxxiii. 10. I have no intention of further noticing the book I have quoted. It is a fair sample

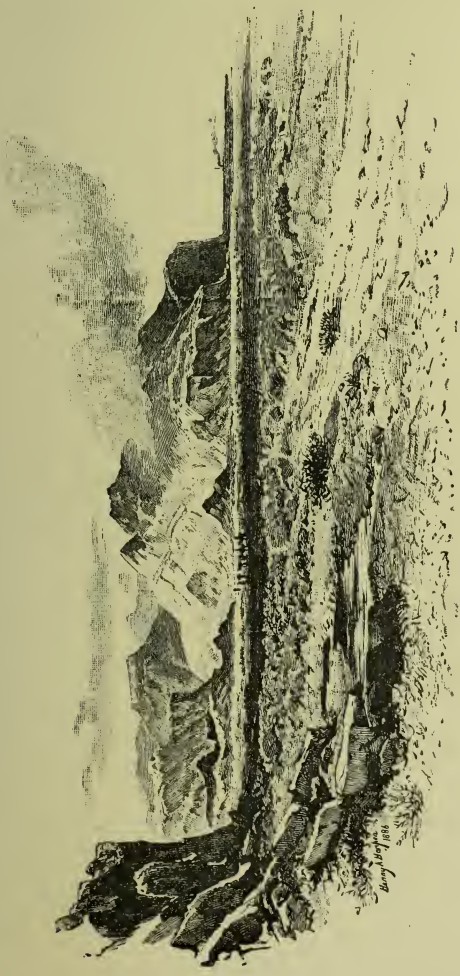
* J. Baker Green, LL.B., 'The Hebrew Migration from Egypt.'

NAGB BUDERAH,

of the 'reasonable proofs'! Those who object to the Bible account of the Exodus make objections to the truthfulness of Moses! When they know as much of the desert as he did, then, perhaps, their remarks will alter, and be of more value.

It does not lie in the scope of this work to describe these Egyptian mines. They have been explored by many scientific travellers—their inscriptions copied. I visited them myself, and obtained some fine turquoise from them. The whole country bears evident traces of a long Egyptian occupation, the mining belt being about twenty-five miles square. This mining region also helps us much in the further route of the Israelites, and disposes of many of the suggested routes writers thought the children of Israel took. I will only mention one—that from Wâdy Shellal by the Nagb Buderah. This latter is an abrupt cliff or precipice of sandstone, about a hundred feet in height. The name Buderah derives its origin from the tribe of Arabs who first made the path passable. Major Macdonald, who years ago reworked the mines, improved it; but before that it must have been impassable. Even now my loaded camels found difficulty in ascending, and how could the Israelites, with their huge array, their flocks and herds and their wagons, have gone over it? Wagons! Well, they must have had some conveyances for the 'tents' or 'booths,' for the baggage—the 'spoils' they borrowed from the Egyptians; and for *proof* of wagons read Numb. vii. There 'six covered wagons and twelve oxen' are spoken of in v. 3. 'Wagons' are repeatedly mentioned in this same chapter. These must have been brought from Egypt, and the route to Wâdy Taiyibeh would offer no obstacles. They might have been rude, if you will—probably they only had two wheels, for in all Egyptian inscriptions there only occurs *one* representation of a wagon with four wheels. They could not have taken them over Nagb Buderah, even in its *improved* state, so we will return to Wâdy Taiyibeh, and pass down it to the sea. The cliffs are very fine

—beautiful, I may say. Some fine palms grow near pools of water. These pools are exquisite in colour, but brackish to



THE GREAT PLAIN OF EL MARKHÂ.

the taste. The track is broad and easy. You reach then the great plain of El Markhâ. On that plain water is found at two places, but it is bad. The plain is about sixteen miles long,

and four to five miles broad. Cliffs on your left hand, sea on the right, bushes of desert growth in plenty; but the heat is usually very great, and the blasts of air come hot from the Red Sea. The effects were very fine when I crossed the plain, but the heat was 'steaming'—hot vapours, giving beautiful effects, but a climate like the Turkish bath. A careful reconsideration of all the arguments of experts leads me to think that this is the 'Wilderness of Sin' (Numb. xxxiii. 11, 12), and here it is that 'manna' is given for bread and quails for 'flesh.' The 'manna' was to come in the morning when 'the dew that lay was gone up,' the quails in the 'evening.' The point of the miracle of quails lies, I think, in this: quails migrate at *night* in Egypt. I have often noted this. When expecting quails at the time of their usual migration, I have walked over a lentil-field late in the evening with my dogs and found none. Next morning at dawn, before sunrise, I have gone over the same field, and the quails rose at every step. The Israelites would know this, for this bird is common in the Delta. By a miracle God had brought those quails by some wind across the Red Sea, so that the tired birds 'came up and covered the camp.' We may note here that a second miracle of quails afterwards happened; and in Psalm lxxviii. 26, 27, it is expressly referred to 'an east wind and a south wind,' and the tired birds fell 'in the midst of their camp.' Having short wings, these birds can only fly a short distance. But the 'wind' in the text would be a 'Khamseen,' and so, again, they would be blown by it, and drop near the camp. Here also we see the wisdom of Moses in making that flank march which enabled him to avoid all the Egyptian mines, as the people were ripe for revolt. They sighed for the 'flesh-pots' of Egypt, and, despising their freedom, looked back on the days of their captivity with longing eyes!

The manna divinely sent could not have been that gum which now at certain seasons of the year drops from the tamarisk-tree. This is produced by the prick of an insect. It is collected;

about 700 pounds weight is the whole yield in the peninsula. It will not keep even when put in tin vessels, but runs to a gummy liquid; at least, that is my experience. Dophkah and Alush are the next camps mentioned; there is no satisfactory identification of these. As to the duration of the camps, Numb. ix. 15-23 shows that the Israelites rested when the cloud remained on the tabernacle. 'Whether it was a day, two days, a month, or a year,' this disposes of a common error, that the Israelites were always on the move; they lived, in short, as do the Bedawîn of to-day, camping sometimes for months at the same place. Not only did they make these prolonged halts at their camps, but they sometimes made *night marches*, as we see from verse 21. What a scene it must have been when the Israelites moved at night! Only those who have seen the Mecca caravan can, I think, realize it, going, as Arabs say, through a desert where there was only 'He' (that is, Allah). The late Sir Richard Burton* well describes a night march: 'At half-past ten that evening we heard the signal for departure, and, as the moon was still young, we prepared for a hard night's work over rough ground covered with thicket. Darkness fell upon us like a pall. The camels tripped and stumbled, tossing their litters like cock-boats in a short sea. It was a strange, wild scene; the black basaltic field was dotted with the huge and doubtful forms of spongy-footed camels, with silent tread, looming like phantoms in the midnight air; the hot wind moaned, and whirled from the torches sheets of flame and fiery smoke; whilst ever and anon a swift-travelling Takhtrawan, drawn by mules and surrounded by runners bearing gigantic Mashals,† threw a passing glow of red light upon the dark road and the dusky multitude.'

* Burton's 'Pilgrimage to Mecca.'

† A cresset. The Pasha's cressets are known by their smell—a little incense being mingled with the wood. By this means the Bedawîn discover the dignitary's place.

Such would be the scene while the host of Israelites marched by night, led by the pillar of fire, through the wilderness, either to escape heat or to avoid their many enemies—the Amalekites, Edomites, or Amorites. As to their water supply on these marches, they again, I think, did as caravans do now: the beasts of burden would carry the water-skins, which would be filled up at the different oases.

The host goes on to Rephidim, which I think we must accept as being the Wâdy Feirân. The objection may be made, 'But how about Wâdy Mokatteb and the Sinaitic writings?'—a most interesting subject. I found these writings all over the peninsula; some are on *granite*, which shows skill in cutting; the mass are, however, on sandstone. They number thousands; but, in spite of the Rev. C. Foster,* I do not think the Israelites had anything to do with them. Professor Palmer and all authorities entitled to credence say the same. Various are the ideas about them, some thinking they are early Christian, because the cross comes in often; but the cross was a well-known heathen sign. Go to the British Museum, and look on the statue of Samsi Vul, King of Assyria, B.C. 825: on his breast he wears this ✠.

The vestments of the priests of Horus, the Egyptian god of light, are marked ☥. At Thebes, in the Tombs of the Kings, royal cows are represented ploughing, a calf playing in front. Each animal has a ☥ like this marked in several places on it. M. Rassam has found buildings at Nineveh marked with the Maltese cross. Osiris, as well as Jupiter Ammon, had for monogram a ☥.

Dr. Schliemann, writing of the cross, says: 'It is the most ancient of all religious emblems, but as an *emblem of Christianity it came into use after Constantine*.' Dean Burgon, writing of the catacombs at Rome, says: 'I question whether a cross occurs in *any Christian* monument of the first four centuries.' The cross

* 'Sinai Photographed.'

is found marked on Phœnician monuments before Christ 1600! Niebuhr rightly sums up Constantine's motive in adopting the cross as a Christian emblem: 'His motives in establishing the Christian religion are something very strange indeed. The religion there was in his head must have been a mere jumble. On his coins he has "the unconquered sun"; he worships Pagan deities, consults the soothsayers, holds heathen superstitions; yet he shuts up the temples and builds churches.'

No; there is no warrant for saying the cross is a Christian emblem; before A.D. 300 'the Christian emblems were the fish, the anchor, the ship, *the dove*, *the palm branch*.'*

The cross as a Christian emblem was brought in when Pagan Rome adopted politically some Christianity, and so became Papal Rome!

For some days past the grandest of all the Sinai mountains, Jebel Serbâl, has been showing his many peaks over the hills—by some Middle Age writers thought to be the Mount of God—but only explore the difficult passes by which you approach Serbal—passes quite impassable for a host, difficult even for a Bedawîn, with no plain at all at the foot of the lower ranges which lie at its base! Grand, imposing as it is, as an artist I can never speak in sufficient praise of its grandeur. Yet it could not be the Mount of the Law.

Wâdy Feirân, the Rephidim, is a fine pass with incessant twists and turns, with a grand cliff at either side, and leads to the greatest of the Sinai oases. But does not the Bible say that 'there was no water'? Yes; there is no water for *many miles*. Professor Palmer has well summed up the whole argument: 'We should not expect a mere desert tribe, such as Amalek was, to sally forth in well-organized troops to meet the advancing hosts of Israel while the latter were yet in the comparatively open wilderness. Their immediate impulse on the first intimation of the enemy's approach would be to collect

* Major Conder in letter to author.

around their wells and palm-groves, and concert measures for protecting these their most precious possessions. When the hostile body had encamped within a short distance of the oasis, they would, no doubt, watch for an opportunity of attacking them unawares, in order to take them at a disadvantage before they could establish their camp or recover from their fatigues. Such would be the tactics of the modern Bedawîn, and such, it appears from the Bible account, was the nature of the opposition which Israel encountered at Rephidim. They had "pitched in Rephidim," but the wells were defended, and they were obliged to halt on the outskirts of the fertile district, "and there was no water for the people to drink." Disappointed and fatigued, they "murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this, that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" The miracle of striking the rock released them from this difficulty, and, as we are told, immediately afterwards, "then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim" (Exod. xvii. 8).'

But it is a significant fact that in Wâdy Feirân, immediately before the part of the valley where the fertility commences, I discovered a rock which Arab tradition regards as the site of the miracle. This rock, which has never before been noticed by travellers, is called Hesy el Khattâtîn, and is surrounded by heaps of pebbles placed upon every available stone in the immediate neighbourhood. These are accounted for as follows: 'When the children of Israel sat down by the miraculous stream and rested, after their thirst was quenched, they amused themselves by throwing pebbles upon the surrounding pieces of rock. This has passed into a custom, which the Arabs of the present day keep up, in memory of the event. It is supposed especially to propitiate Moses, and anyone having a sick friend throws a pebble in his name, with the assurance of speedy relief.'*

* 'Desert of the Exodus,' i., pp. 158, 159.

To the Bedawîn of to-day Feirân is a real paradise. I can sympathize with them. When we approached the oasis, my men burst out into loud songs in its praise. Through the broad wâdy there runs a small stream, giving life and verdure all round, for here grow over five thousand palm-trees; the date palm, too—not that wild desert one—bushes of tamarisk,* Sidr trees; patches of corn, maize, or tobacco, irrigated by the Shâdûf. The dates grown here are the finest in all the Egyptian territory. Birds sang and doves cooed in the trees. There is a small permanent village of Bedawîn to guard and tend the trees, for each tree has its owner, who has to pay a tax on its produce to the Egyptian Government. The oasis has one great drawback, being liable to sudden floods. The Rev. F. Holland saw one which swept away in a moment a whole encampment of Arabs, their flocks and tents, and he narrowly escaped. On a hill are ruins of an old Christian village and remains of two churches; while in the cliffs are innumerable caves or cells, burrowed out by hermits in olden time. Tombs abound. There are paths made to Serbal—paths of huge boulders, some clamped with *iron bars*,† showing that a large population, possessing great engineering skill, once existed here. Old writers speak of 'fairs,' held once a year; but, fertile as the wâdy now is, surely it must have been more so in old days, and very different, for I found many buildings of sun-dried bricks—bricks made from mud. Where did that come from? Well, in Feirân, as well as in other wâdies, you will see 'Jorfs,' as the Arabic has it—banks of sedimentary deposits, in which you can find shells of *fresh-water* mussels. I have found these shells in more than one wâdy.‡ What does

* The tamarisk is a tree as well as a bush. There are fine specimens of it in Sinai; even in England I know of some very fine trees of tamarisk.

† Proofs exist that *iron ore* was known and worked by Egyptians in Sinai.

‡ I found quantities of these shells in the old mines at Maghara. From the heaps in which they lie, it would seem they were used as food by the miners.

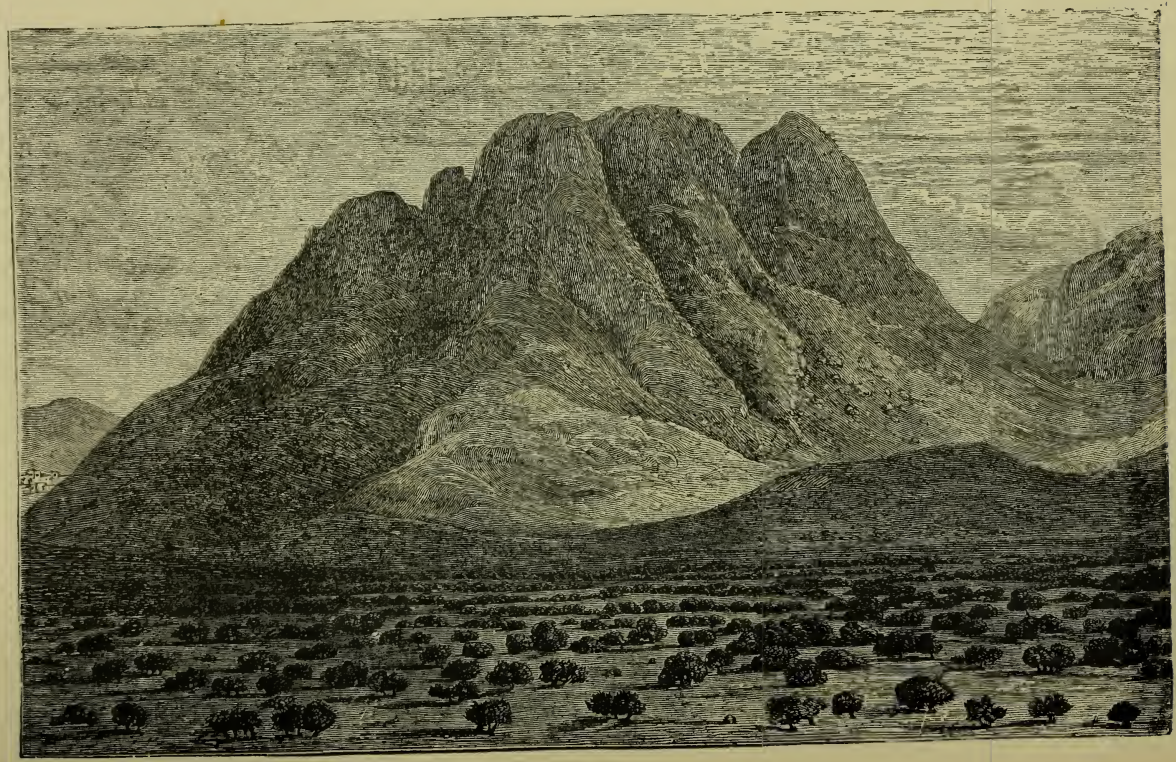
that prove? Why, that at some time quiet *lakes* of fresh water existed here. Something happened, and the lower end gave way; the water ran off. These floods cut their way through the soft bed of the old lakes, and left these banks, 'Jorfs.' I hazard no conjecture as to when this took place, but many facts show that the Desert of Sinai is now more barren than it was in ancient days, and it is *becoming more so*. Why? Well, the Bedawîn of Sinai have to pay taxes to the Egyptian Government, and that tax is ordered to be paid in charcoal. To get this they must cut down trees. I have seen the long array of camels carrying this charcoal tax, and then did not wonder that timber is becoming scarce. Old men speak of trees in certain wâdies, where none now exist; and yet in many have I seen splendid groves of acacia and other timber trees, and therefore cease to wonder at the size of the planks used in the tabernacle, for Exod. xxxvi. 21 tells us, 'Ten cubits was the *length* of a board, and a cubit and a half the *breadth* of each board.' Rain, too, must have been frequent—indeed, it is so now—for in Psalm lxviii. 9 it says, 'Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance when it was weary.' On one occasion I filled up my water-skins from rain pools in the granite rocks, in an apparently waterless wâdy.* Dews are very heavy, often soaking the tents. We read of 'dews' in Exod. xvi. 13; Numb. xi. 9. These and many other facts lead me to the conclusion that at the time of the Exodus the Sinai Desert was more fruitful far than now. Three thousand years of neglect; for after the Exodus the Egyptians would seem to have abandoned all their mines, and the country has been left to the Arabs, who, as a rule, only destroy. Later on we shall examine some of the proofs of ancient *settled* habitations in the whole region.

* More than once I was forced to halt from rain, and Holland once gave me a graphic account of an ascent of Sinai he made in a snowstorm.

A difficulty must now be faced: the Bible says, 'For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness: and there Israel camped before the mount' (Exod. xix. 2). Professor Palmer remarks:

'Now, if Jebel Mûsa be Sinai, it could hardly be reached in a single day's journey by any large host with heavy baggage. From Feirân the road is broad and open enough as far as the Nagb Hawa; but the laden camels must make a detour of some six or eight hours by the valley which comes in a little lower down to the left, namely Wâdy es Sheikh . . . but when they had come to that pass which forms, as it were, the gate of the Sinai district, they may be fairly said to have reached "the desert of Sinai." The words "and there Israel camped before the mount" seem to me to imply a separate operation, and I should be inclined to interpret the passage thus: They were departed from Rephidim, or Feirân, and had reached the wilderness of Sinai—that is, the Sinai district at the mouth of the Nagb Hawa—and here they began to look out for a suitable place for a permanent camp. The spot chosen was the plain of Er Râhâh, "And there Israel camped before the mount."' He also points out it is quite possible Moses and the elders took the short route through the pass, leaving the host to go the longer route. The professor and Sir Charles Wilson did this. I did it years after, and got to Jebel Mûsa, walking, some hours before my camels. The host may also have travelled as Bedawîn do: march six or eight hours, then rest, and pursue their journey in the evening. Again, I have more than once done a 'forced march' in this way, and without much fatigue traversed ground that usually occupies two days' march.

It is most tempting to try to describe Sinai—'Râs Sufsâfeh'; but it has been done so thoroughly by the Ordnance Survey



RÂS SUFSÂFEH, 'SINAI,' AND PLAIN OF ER RÂHÂH.

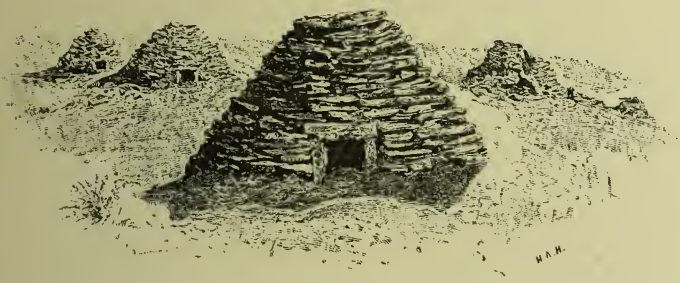
party, and by Professor Palmer, that I must pass it, only remarking that 'Sinai' is a *chain* of mountains with many peaks, ending with a grand bluff, which fronts the plain of Er Râhâh. It may be impossible to *prove* that Râs Sufsâfeh be Sinai; but the difficulties in the way of proving *that* are of no moment compared to the difficulties attaching to the other mountains suggested—such as Serbâl, Umm Shummur, or Mount Hor: none other but the one named fits in with the Bible narrative. No other mountain in the peninsula has a *plain* at its foot where a multitude could encamp; no other mountain has vegetation in its front on which flocks and herds could feed, as the Bible tells us they did at Sinai; and if we go to Arab traditions, all are in favour of Râs Sufsâfeh. Difficulties which the student at home may feel are no difficulties to one who has explored this region of Sinai; and the opinion of all those scientific observers of the Ordnance Survey was that Râs Sufsâfeh was the 'Mount of God.' Accurate survey of the plain of Er Râhâh shows it to be 400 acres in extent; and when the open wâdies near and surrounding are taken into account, there are in all 940 acres of excellent standing ground in front and in full view of Râs Sufsâfeh (which is the Arabic name of the bold bluff or cliff which fronts the plain). Impossible to ascend is the bluff *in front;* easy at either side; and this would explain why, when Moses and Joshua were descending the mount, they did not *at first see* the multitude and the camp, and why Joshua—the soldier—thought there was a noise 'of war in the camp.' Moses had keener ears, and said, 'It is the noise of them that sing' (Exod. xxxii. 17, 18). In the matter of the Tables of the Law, art has led the world astray. Michael Angelo represents Moses as a strong athlete, struggling with two heavy tombstones, so to speak; yet the least knowledge of Hebrew would prove that those stone tablets, the writing of which was 'the writing of God,' would

really be very small—not so large as a page of this book. Go to the British Museum and look on those Deluge Tablets, and see how much could be written on a small surface, and no longer think that Middle Age art was right, but study your facts in the light of the Bible. We call 'the Law' the ten commandments; the Hebrew original calls them 'the ten words.'

The command is there given to leave Sinai—for the host to enter the Promised Land. Though led by the pillar of fire and cloud, yet Moses asks Hobab to be as 'eyes' to them, he knowing all the desert. This selection had far-reaching consequences (as we shall see in Judges). They go through the 'great and terrible wilderness' to Paran, a region well known (Gen. xiv. 6; xxi. 21). They went by 'the way (or *road*) of the mountain of the Amorites,' and then on to 'Kadesh-barnea' (Deut. i. 19). The first station after Sinai was Kibroth-hattaavah. Palmer thought he had found this in Wâdy el Hebeibeh, where a bit of elevated ground is covered with small enclosures of stones, and on a hill near an erection of rough stones, surmounted by a white block of pyramidal shape. He and Drake explored this camp, found old fireplaces, in which were charcoal, and outside the camp stone heaps, which he says could be nothing else but graves. The place is called by the Arabs Erweïs* el Ebeirig; and Arab tradition says a Hajj caravan pitched their tents here, and then were lost in the Tîh Desert. Later travellers do not consider this question settled. The desert into which the Israelites moved is now called Bâdiet et Tîh—'the desert of the wanderings.' Shut in on one side by the Edomites, on the other by the Amalekites, and in front by the Amorites—a very desert country indeed, but having (so Drake told me) wâdies in which grass grew high. Scattered all over the peninsula are rude-stone build-

* See 'Desert of the Exodus,' Palmer, vol. i., p. 257.

ings, which the Arabs say were erected by the Israelites to protect themselves from mosquitoes. They call these stone buildings *nawâmis;* but this word really only means 'a shelter for huntsmen.' I have explored many. They are rude in construction, circular at base, rising like a cone, and having a very small entrance-door. None of them are near springs. They must have been built before the Sinaitic inscriptions, for the Ordnance Survey party found inscriptions on the ruins of some *nawâmis.* It is suggested they belonged to those very people of Amalek who fought with Israel in Rephidim (Exod. xvii. 8). Stone-circles like the so-called Druidical circles are



NAWÂMIS.

frequently found. Also 'cup-markings' cut in rocks with rude tools, foot and sole marks, and old rock sculptures; and these are quite apart from the so-called Sinaitic inscriptions. There are many enclosures consisting of a low wall of stones, with thorny acacia inserted. These are called 'hazeroth,' or fenced enclosures. It would be about the middle of May when the Israelites moved into the Tîh. A second miracle of quails occurs. The tired birds, instead of flying high, flew 'two cubits'—about three feet—above the ground, so that they could easily be captured. The people were smitten with plague, and the place was called Kibroth-hattaavah ('the graves of lust') (Numb. xi. 34, margin). From thence they

journey to Hazeroth, and thence to Kadesh-barnea. Many have been the attempts to find the latter place, so important in the history of the wanderings. Dr. Robinson, the celebrated traveller, thought he had found it; but the position he located for it would have been untenable from a military point of view, and would have exposed the Israelites to attacks from every quarter. The Rev. John Rowlands, familiar with the country, at a third attempt had the good fortune to find the oasis, now called 'Ain Kadîs. This name is the exact Arabic form of the Hebrew Kadesh. On his way he identified 'S'beita' as the site of the ancient Zephath. Mr. Rowlands thus describes the place:

'The rock is a large single mass, or a small hill of solid rock, a spur of the mountain to the north of it rising immediately above it. It is the only visible naked rock in the whole district. The stream when it reaches the channel turns westwards, and after running about three or four hundred yards loses itself in the sand. I have not seen such a lovely sight anywhere else in the whole desert—such a copious and lovely stream.'

He gives many proofs of its identity with Kadesh. I give a few:

'It lies at the foot of the mountains of the Amorites (Deut. i. 19). It is situated near the grand pass or entrance into the Promised Land by the Beer Lahai-Roi well, which is the only easy entrance from the desert to the east of Jebel Hâlal, and most probably the entrance to which the Hebrews were conducted from Sinai towards the Land of Promise. A good road leads to this place all the way from Sinai. A grand road, still finer, I was told, by broad wâdies, goes from 'Ain Kadîs to Mount Hor. The locality answers, in every respect, to the description given of it in Scripture.'*

* Appendix, Robinson's 'Researches.'

Professor Palmer tried hard to find this place. He was misled by an Arab, a sheikh, the very man who years after betrayed Palmer to his death.

To the skill and perseverance of an American traveller, Dr. Trumbull, we owe the rediscovery of Kadesh. After a charming account of the difficulties put in his way by the Arabs, he says :*

'Wâdy Qadees is an extensive hill-encircled, irregular-surfaced plain, several miles wide ; it is certainly large enough to have furnished a camping-ground for Chedorlaomer's army, or for all the host of Israel. . . . About the middle of Wâdy Qadees is an extensive water-bed of unusual fertility for the desert. Rich fields of wheat and barley covered a large portion of it. . . . There were artificial ridges to retain and utilize the rainfall for irrigation. We saw a large grain-magazine dug into the ground. . . . The lintel of the door-way of this granary was a large tree-trunk, larger than we should look for in the desert nowadays.'

He found pits, cisterns, cairns, and circles of stone, low stone walls, like low dams, such as described by Robinson and Palmer—the 'little plantations' of olden times. Then came 'a rough stone-covered plain.' The mid-day heat intense. Dazzling chalk hills ; desolation all around after three hours. They turned an angle of the hills, 'and then the long-sought wells of Qadees were before our eyes.'

'It was a marvellous sight ! Out from the barren and desolate stretch of the burning desert waste we had come with magical suddenness into an oasis of verdure and beauty unlooked for and hardly conceivable in such a region. A carpet of grass covered the ground. Fig-trees laden with fruit nearly ripe enough for eating were alone the shelter of the southern hillside. Shrubs and flowers showed themselves

* 'Kadesh Barnea,' pp. 269-272.

in variety and profusion. Running water gurgled under the waving grass. We had seen nothing like it since leaving Wâdy Feirân, nor was it equalled in loveliness of scene by any single bit of landscape of like extent even there.' He notices the rock described by Rowlands, and gives further details:

'A circular stone well, stoned up from the bottom with time-worn limestone blocks, was the first receptacle of the water. A marble watering-trough was near this well, better finished than the troughs at Beersheba, but of like primitive workmanship.' A second well, another marble trough, a basin or pool larger than either of the wells. All water seemed to come from subterranean springs under the rock. 'Camel and goat dung, as if of flocks and herds for centuries, trodden down with the limestone rock, so as to form a solid plaster bed.'

'Another and a larger pool lower down the slope was supplied with water by a stream which rippled and cascaded along its narrow bed from the upper pool; and yet beyond this, westwards, the water gurgled away under the grass as we had met it when we came in, and finally lost itself in the parching wâdy from which this oasis opened. The water itself was remarkably pure and sweet, unequalled by any we had found after leaving the Nile.

'There was a New England look to this oasis, especially in the flowers and grasses and weeds, quite unlike anything we had seen in the Peninsula of Sinai. Bees were humming there and birds were flitting from tree to tree. Enormous ant-hills made of green grass seed, instead of sand, were numerous. As we came into the wâdy we had started up a hare, and had seen larks and quails. It was, in fact, hard to realize that we were in the desert, or even near it.'

Such the long-sought-for oasis, the 'En-mishpat, which is Kadesh,' where Chedorlaomer halted (Gen. xiv. 7); where

Israel 'abode many days' when the people 'chode' with Moses; where he 'smote' the rock with his rod; where the 'water came out abundantly'; where Miriam died; where Israel waited for the return of the spies, and to which those spies brought back the 'cluster of grapes' which they cut at Eshcol, and to which after thirty-eight years of wandering the host returned. No place in the Bible narrative so arrests the attention, after the 'Mount of God,' as this Kadesh. It is a common mistake to think that 'Eshcol' was near Hebron. 'Eshcol' means a 'bunch of grapes.' The discoveries of Palmer prove that the Negeb, or south country, was near, and the whole of that region shows indisputably that grapes were then grown.

The discovery of Kadesh has other consequences; it shows us that the Israelites did not use the ''Arabah' as their main camping-ground. That great wâdy, surrounded as it was by their enemies, would have been no safe camping-ground for them; but stopping at Kadesh, and the desert near, they would be out of the track and in defensible positions. 'So also the traditional Mount Hor must be recognised as an impossible Mount Hor.'*

The Israelites, frightened by the report of the spies, rebel, are punished, and then the awful fiat goes forth: 'Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness.'

Blind to all warning, they presume to 'go up into the hilltop,' are defeated, and 'discomfited even to Hormah.' The word means 'banning,' and is identical with Zephath. This has been identified by Palmer with 'S'beita,' and he discovered close by the ancient 'watch tower' (which again is the meaning of the Hebrew word). This tower is on the top of a hill. The ruins are primeval, though there are more recent fortifications. From this fort the Amorites and Canaanites most likely issued

* 'Kadesh Barnea,' p. 320.

to attack Israel. The Arabic words used for the valley near the mountain mean 'the ravine of the Amorite,' and the mountains themselves are called by a word meaning 'head' or 'top' 'of the Amorites.' The wanderings begin in Numb. xxxiii. The list of stations is given. An examination of some of the names will give a clue as to why they were chosen. Rithmath, a name coming from 'retem,' a broom bush, probably means valley of broom bushes. Kadesh, 'holy place,' its original name, En-mishpat (Gen. xiv. 7), 'well of judgment'; Kadesh *Barnea*, its newer name, 'the land of moving to and fro,' or 'wandering,' or 'shaken.' Then *Rimmon parez*, 'the pomegranate breach.' Libnah, 'whiteness,' probably from the white poplar-trees growing there. Rissah, 'dew.' Mount Shapher, 'the mount of beauty' or of 'goodliness.' Mithcah, 'sweetness,' in reference to the water. Hashmonah, 'fatness,' 'fruitfulness,' where to this day there is a pool full of sweet living water with abundant vegetation around. Bene-Jaakan, or, as in Deut. x. 6, 'Beeroth of the children of Jaakan,' 'the wells of the children of Jaakan,' probably the wells which the Jaakanites had dug on their expulsion by the Edomites from their original homes (Gen. xxxvi. 27; 1 Chron. 1-42). Jotbathah, 'goodness,' and Ebronah, probably 'fords.' The other names are either derived from peculiarities of scenery or else from special events, as Kehelathah, 'assembling'; Makheloth, 'assemblies'; Haradah, 'place of terror.'*

We have already seen from the text that the Israelites often camped for lengthened periods, contrary to the common idea. They must have lived in touch with tribes—for instance, the Bene-Jaakan. They had money, for they offered to buy 'meat' and 'water.' And Deut. ii. 28, 29 tells how they had done this with 'the children of Esau which dwelt in Seir, and the Moabites which dwelt in Ar.'

* Dr. Edersheim.

Moses, when he sent messengers to the King of Edom, asking permission to pass through his land, calls Kadesh 'a city in the uttermost of thy border.' He appeals to the king that he would let 'thy *brother* Israel' pass through. He touchingly tells of their past troubles, and of the Divine deliverance, but Edom haughtily refused—came 'out with a strong hand'—that is, in force he held the passes which would have given the Israelites easy access to the Promised Land. So they 'turned away from him'—reading this, how is it possible that the traditional Mount Hor can be the place of Aaron's grave? It was not until the days of Josephus, fifteen centuries after Aaron's death, that the mountains near Petra were thought to be the place of this funeral. Read the Bible, and leave tradition alone, then I think it will be admitted that this commonly accepted site does not fit in with the text. The true site of Kadesh being found helps us to the true Mount Hor. The Hebrew form of words to describe this mountain are Hor,* ha Har, literally, Mountain, 'The Mountain.'† It does not say it was the highest. Just as we have seen that Jebel Serbâl, though higher and grander than Mûsa, is not the 'Mount of God.'

Is it likely that after Israel had asked permission to enter Edom, and been met with a refusal, they would march into the very heart of the country, camp close to its capital, and then bury Aaron in the mountain close by? 'Moreover, the Bible record shows that when the Israelites moved from Kadesh Barnea to Mount Hor, they alarmed the King of Arad, in the land of Canaan, as if they were advancing threateningly northwards, and in consequence he came out against them in force. It has been a puzzle of puzzles for commentators to explain

* The word 'Hor,' mountain, is also used for Hermon. See Numb. xxxiv. 7, 8.

† Dr. Trumbull, 'Kadesh Barnea.'

why that king should have supposed that the Israelites were coming towards him when they were really going from him, as they must have been doing if Jebel Neby Harûn (the traditional Mount Hor) was their destination. . . . And in addition to all the other reasons for rejecting these claims, it should be considered that since the stretch of Edom was on both sides of the 'Arabah, the 'Arabah itself, northwards of the lower extremity of Mount Seir was within the territory of Edom, hence it could not have been entered by the Israelites.'*

Deut. x. 6 gives another name to 'the mountain' on which Aaron died—'Moserah.' Now, within a day's march of Kadesh is a remarkable mountain called 'Moderah,' rising by itself alone from a plain. It stands on the boundaries of Edom, of Canaan, and the Wilderness of Paran—the very verge of the Land of Promise. All the border wâdies run to it and the plain. Every traveller who has seen it appears to have been struck by its remarkable isolation. Robinson calls it a 'lofty citadel.'

Professor Hull thinks the traditional Mount Hor at Petra is *the* site, but one of the reasons he gives fails to commend itself to my mind:

'We may well suppose the eyes of the high-priest of Israel were allowed to rest themselves upon the hills of Judea, ere he resigned his priestly robes, and prepared himself for his resting-place, perhaps in the little cave which is covered by a Mohammedan shrine.'

Measure on the map a straight line from Petra to Hebron; you will find it eighty miles or about. What human eyes could see objects at that distance? and, further, how could he then have seen over those heights at Hebron? What Bible warrant is there for thinking Aaron had a view of the Promised Land? Anyhow, he would see very little of it from Petra.

* Dr. Trumbull, 'Kadesh Barnea.'

The Israelites had received the refusal of the King of Edom; they must,' therefore, make a detour to reach Wâdy 'Arabah *below*, where the army of Edom was placed. Deut. x. 7 tells us they 'journeyed into Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters.' On their way they were attacked by the King of Arad. Then Israel vowed a vow to destroy those cities, and years after did so, and gave the place the name of Hormah—'utter destruction.' Future examination of that country will show how faithfully they fulfilled their vow, and how desolate it still remains. No Bedawîn will camp there, though massive remains of cities, old wells and aqueducts exist.

The Bible narrative, I think, is clear; that the Israelites never entered the Wâdy 'Arabah, except when they traversed that part near Ezion-geber, when they compassed Mount Seir.

The pilgrim host has to go on through the 'way of the Red Sea,' and were discouraged 'because of the way.' Fiery serpents punish the people. The desert near Ezion-geber (the giant's backbone) is intensely hot, bare of vegetation, desolate, rough, and visited by terrible sand-storms—pre-eminently 'that great and terrible wilderness' of which Moses afterwards reminded the people.

Travellers say snakes are common. Bedawîn say the same. 'Some are marked with fiery spots and spiral lines,' evidently belonging to the most poisonous species.

The brazen serpent is called *saraph*—'fiery'—so we may infer that the expression describes rather the appearance of these 'fire snakes' than the effect of their bite.*

Then they go to Ije Abarim, 'the passages,' or 'hills of the passages,' by which they were approaching the wilderness of Moab, thence to the valley of Zared, which name means 'willow,' and corresponds to the Arabic *sufsâfeh*, the name still

* Edersheim.

of a wâdy which here forms the boundary between Edom and Moab. They are not to touch Moab, so they remove and go north, passing through the wilderness of Moab, till they come to Arnon. They 'pitched on the other side of Arnon.' Why? Because the country is a high tableland 3,200 feet above sea-level, and cut into two districts by ravines of stupendous size by the Mojib, the Arnon, and the Zerka. Canon Tristram estimates the width of the valley through which the Arnon flows at three miles, and its depth 2,150 feet, at its greatest depth—a good reason why the host stopped. They would cross it higher up in the wilderness. Then we get a reference to a lost book, 'the book of the wars of the Lord.' Was this 'book' a record of war-songs sung over camp-fires just as Bedawîn do to-day? It seems most likely. They went on to 'Beer,' where a well was dug, thence to Mattanah, which 'we may easily recognise as the great Wâdy Wâleh, with its rude-stone monuments and brook. Nahaliel, "the valley of God," is the gorge of Callirhoe, above which on the north stands another great group of both menhirs and dolmens, and thus Bamoth Baal falls into place as the ridge south of the stream of Wâdy Jideid, now called the "Crucified One," which presents a group of more than a hundred rude-stone monuments. The Israelite journey was thus in a straight line to Pisgah, and their camps were at distances equal to those which the Bedawîn accomplish on an average in their moves. Each great brook is mentioned, and the line is that which a large body of men must of necessity take on account of the absence of water on the flat plateau further east.'* Now they got their first view of the Land of Promise, for they looked towards Jeshimon, that waste west of the Dead Sea.

The Israelites send messengers to Sihon, asking permission to pass through his country, promising to eat nothing, to drink

* Major Conder.

no water from the wells without payment, and to go on the king's highway doing no damage, in short. The messengers return with his refusal, and tell of his approach with his army; but these Israelites are no longer of the same cowardly hearts as their fathers; they joyfully go forth to meet him, and at Jahaz the hosts come into conflict, and he is completely defeated, and they possess all his land. He had risked his all on one battle, and had lost—at Jahaz, by some identified with Muhatel el Haj. On a hill are ruins of a town, also of a fort. Sihon chose a strong position; but the Israelites take the land from Arnon to Yabbok. This latter river, now called the Zerka, would indeed give a strong frontier to Ammon. It is a winding stream, with bold and rocky cliffs; on its hill-slopes massive ruins; old canals for water irrigation, sometimes extending for five or eight miles, and showing great engineering skill. All record is lost as to who made these works. Israel took all the cities and Heshbon, which was the capital of Sihon. Its position is on a 'vast tableland, on the brow of which, to the west, the crest is a little elevated, and to the eastwards of it a slight depression of three or four miles in extent, beyond which the rounded hills rise 200 feet, and gently slope away to the east. In the centre of this depression is a small hill, perhaps 200 feet high, but entirely isolated, with a small stream running past it on the east. This is Heshbon. The hill is one heap of shapeless ruin, while all the neighbouring slopes are full of caves, which have once been occupied—turned into use as habitations. The citadel hill has also a shoulder, and a spur to the south, likewise covered with ruins.'*

In 1882 a thorough examination of the ruins of Heshbon was made by Major Conder and Captain Mantell. Those officers report that the ruins of the capital of Sihon consist of shapeless mounds, of hewn stones, and pillars of a later period.

* Canon Tristram, 'Land of Moab.'

A good view is to be got over the great Belka plateau, and from the high top, west of the ruins, the Jordan Valley becomes visible. On this hilltop they found the oldest stone monuments

STONE CIRCLE NEAR HESHBON.

as yet found in Syria. Cromlechs were numerous. The centre of these monuments appeared to be on the rounded summit, west of Heshbon. Ruins of a cairn, with a circle of stones of

moderate size surrounding it—the circle forty feet in diameter. Lower down the hill another circle, 200 yards in diameter, consisting of two rows of stones, with an interval of eight feet between them. Outside this circle, north, south, and west, cromlechs of every size and form. Twenty-six were clearly recovered, and other fallen ones noticed. A very fine one exists on the north, near the foot of the spur, which rises 800 feet above the wâdy. This specimen, found and photographed by Lieutenant Mantell, has a table-stone measuring nine feet by eight feet, supported by two very square standing stones, and measures five feet six inches in the clear under the table-stone. On the plateau, north-east of the central cairn and circle, is another fine cromlech of equal dimensions. These two are the largest and most lofty; the average height of the standing stones being about three feet, with a table-stone five feet square. There is a second group of cromlechs on the north side of Wâdy Hesbân, about a mile away. All these are so placed (sixteen in number) as to obtain a view of the hill east of them; and all are placed on the east slope of the hill, none on the west. All this points to the fact that Heshbon was a sacred mountain, and that the cromlechs were built facing it in positions whence the sacred centre might be seen with the sun rising behind it.

Circular stones are found in the top-stones of the Heshbon group. Possibly they may be connected with the use of the cromlechs as altars, either as receptacles for blood or for fire. Circular holes are found in the live rock, close to the cromlechs. Rock-cut chambers are found in connection with these cromlechs; they are generally three to five feet long, three feet broad and high; some others six to seven feet long, evidently tombs. They are excavated in detached rocks; the cromlechs occur in connection with ancient towns. Flint instruments are found on the flat ground, none on the hills.

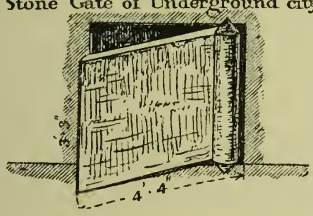
Moses then sent to spy out Jazer, and they found 'the place was a place for cattle.' Green sites of ancient towns exist here —Umm Jaûzeh, with a copious spring; Safût and another. Jeremiah speaks of a 'Sea of Jazer,' but there is no trace of a lake. Ruins of a town called Beit Zer'ah are near, and here begin to rise the wooded uplands of Gad. In a few short verses Moses relates the history of this successful campaign, when, for the first time, this *new* race of Israelites saw 'cities.' Their fathers were dead in the wilderness; their sons were of stouter hearts, and 'cities' no longer appalled them. They 'utterly destroy' every inhabited city. Having so far cleared their flank, they now turn to meet a new enemy—Og, King of Bashan, and his army—the only remaining type of 'the giants.' His 'cities' are spoken of as 'fenced with high walls, gates and bars, besides the unwalled (or country) towns, a great many.' The victors sweep up to Hermon, capture all the tableland, and all the cities of the kingdom. This region in the Bible is called 'Argob,' 'a heap of stones.'* Let us examine its present condition. 'It would be difficult to mention a spot in civilized lands which could be compared to this ancient region in regard to its wild and savage aspect. It is one great sea of lava. The lava-bed proper embraces about 350 square miles; its average height above the surrounding plain is perhaps twenty feet, but it sends out black promontories of rock into the surrounding plain. There are few openings into the interior. Roads had to be excavated to the towns situated in Argob (now called Lejjah, "a place of refuge"). The surface of this "Argob" is almost black, and has the appearance of the sea when it is in motion beneath a dark, cloudy sky; but this sea of lava is motionless, its great

* Schumacher, 'Across the Jordan,' does not agree with the usually accepted site of Argob, and proposes to place it on the slopes of Bashan. See p. 45.

waves are petrified. In cooling the lava cracked and split, so there are great fissures and chasms which cannot be crossed. Often this lava-bed is broken into hillocks, and between them, and also in the rolling plains, are many intervals of soil, which is of amazing fertility. The country is full of extinct craters, too many to number. The whole lava region embraces several thousand square miles, extending to the Haurân Mountains. The region is not waterless. In many places are copious living fountains, with abundant water, cool and sweet. Ruins of towns abound. The Arabs say in the Haurân, which includes Argob, there are quite a thousand.'*

It would require a whole volume to describe the ruins which

Stone Gate of Underground city.



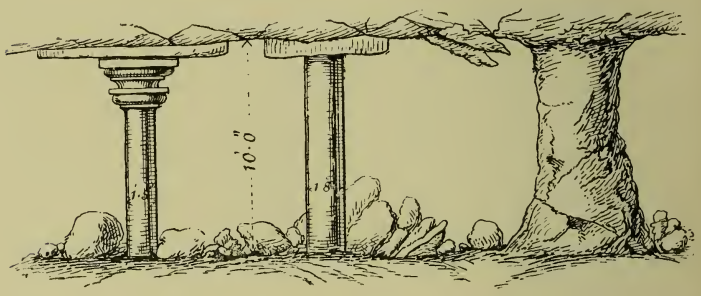
have been explored. The Bible especially mentions one place, Edrei, which would seem to have been the capital town of Og. This place has been identified and visited by a few travellers. Its present name, Ed-Dera'ah; first discovered by Consul Wetzstein in 1860, explored and mapped since by Schumacher in 1886.† Accounts of this wonderful city have been given by others. I will condense the accounts. It is a *subterranean* city. There is a small court, twenty-six feet long, eight feet three inches wide, with steps leading down into it, which has been built as an approach to the actual entrance of the caves. Then come large basaltic slabs, then a passage, twenty feet

* Dr. Merrill, 'East of Jordan.'

† 'Across the Jordan,' Schumacher; pp. 135, 148.

long, four feet wide, which slopes down to a large room, which is shut off by a *stone* door; so this underground city could be guarded.

Columns ten feet high support the roof of the chambers into which you now enter; these columns are of later period, but there are other supports built out of the basaltic rock. Then come dark and winding passages—a broad street, which had dwellings on both sides of it, whose height and width left nothing to be desired. The temperature was mild, no difficulty in breathing; several cross streets, with holes in the ceiling for air; a market-place, a broad street with numerous shops in the



walls; then into a side street, and a great hall, with a ceiling of a single slab of jasper, perfectly smooth and of immense size. Air-holes are frequent, going up to the surface of the ground about sixty feet. Cisterns are frequent in the floors. Tunnels partly blocked, too small for anyone now to creep through, are found. The two travellers from whom I have quoted believe that a far greater city exists than the portion they explored.

'This remarkable subterranean city was presumably hollowed out to receive the population of the upper town in times of danger, and the people were thus prepared to stand a siege on the part of the enemy for as long as their magazines were filled with food, their stables with cattle, and the cisterns with water.

If, however, the enemy had found out how to cut off their supply of air by covering up the air-holes, the besieged would have had to surrender or perish.' The average depth of the city from the surface of the ground is about seventy feet. Further exploration is needed here. What has been already found shows that a large population could exist here.

AIR-HOLE.

A curious historical fact may be here mentioned, that when Baldwin III. (1144-1162) and the Crusaders went to Bozrah, they went by this town. The army suffered for want of water, but as often as they let down buckets by ropes into the cisterns here, men concealed in this underground city cut the ropes. In 1874 the President of Queen's College, Belfast,* found a curious old city about two miles in circuit, the buildings of black basalt. Some of the ruins were inhabited, but they were chiefly buried. The ancient houses were cave-like, of massive walls, of roughly-hewn blocks of basalt; stone doors of the same material, and roofs of long slabs closely laid together. Most of the houses were originally above ground. Others were excavated out of the solid rocks. He mentions many other similar towns. Dr. Merrill† again speaks of cyclopean structures; he found one near Kirateh. 'This structure' (for he found fifteen similar ones) 'is built of large unhewn stones, and was from twenty-five to thirty-five feet in length. That was the length of the front wall, which was exactly north and south. The western outline circular; in the centre of each structure a rectangular pit or hole, eight, nine, and sometimes twelve feet long, and six to eight feet wide. . . . The platform, of great unhewn stones, into which the pit appears to be sunk, was built with striking regularity and solidity.' He considers them too costly for tombs, and thinks the ruins about show that

* Quarterly Statement, April, 1881, p. 77.

† Dr. Merrill, 'East of Jordan,' pp. 30-42.

this platform was the base of some rude pyramid, but the structures were of great age. A 'colossal head of Astarte' was found at another place; the fragment is now in England. Another head with rays was found at Alil—a bullock's head on an altar of basalt, now in America. From a hill this same observer saw forty ruined towns. On a stone he discovered a sculptured image of Dusares or Bacchus, and a strange figure holding grapes in his hand; he thinks it Phœnician. In Deut. iii. 10, 'Salchah' is mentioned as one of Og's towns. Arabs now call this place Salkhad. Here there are ruins of an old castle, built in the mouth of an extinct crater. On the wall of this castle is a curious inscription: a rude tree with pendent fruit, guarded at the foot of the tree by two strange four-footed animals, like leopards. To my mind it is a rude representation of the tree of life. We shall see later some more of the wonderful stone ruins which still exist in Bashan. Can we wonder then at the pride with which Moses reminds the people that it was 'the Lord our God' who delivered Og and all his cities with their walls and gates into the hands of these people who had seen so little of war? No wonder, I say, that Moses recalls 'the great things He hath done.'*

* The discovery of the underground cities enables us to see the point of the promise Moses made to Israel:

'Moreover the Lord thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are *left*, and *hide* themselves from thee, be destroyed' (Deut. vii. 20).

Also:

'And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow' (Josh. xxiv. 12).

Therefore we can see that when the Amorites retired to these underground cities, which they would consider impregnable, clouds of hornets were sent to drive them out. The hornet makes its nest in various ways, some species placing them underground, some suspending them from trees.

The Talmudical writers speak of the terrible power of the hornet, and say four could destroy a horse, and one kill a man, provided he was stung in the forehead. The sting is very severe indeed, exceeding in virulence

There is a curious archæological note in Deuteronomy, where it is said Og's 'bedstead was a bedstead of iron.' Major Conder says of this:* 'This passage has exercised the ingenuity of many commentators, and is generally supposed to refer to a basalt sarcophagus; but there is no basalt at Rabbath, while all we know of early tribes would render it very doubtful if Og was likely to be buried in a sarcophagus. The word may, however, mean a hut (as in Arabic), or more properly a throne, while it is not impossible that the word rendered "iron" may mean (as in Talmudic use) "strong" or "princely." The monument in such case would be Og's throne rather than his bedstead. A memory of Irish dolmens suggested to me a possible connection between Og's throne and some rude stone monument which tradition might have indicated as a giant's seat, just as in Ireland dolmens are the "beds of Grain and Diarmed" and connected with legends of giants. It was therefore very striking to find a single enormous dolmen standing alone in a conspicuous position near Rabbath Ammon, and yet more striking that the top stone measured thirteen feet (or very nearly nine cubits of sixteen inches) in length (the size given in Deuteronomy). The extreme breadth

that of the wasp, to which it is closely allied. The Talmudists say that these hornets killed the people by stinging them in the eye.

Sir Dighton Probyn once gave me an account of a circumstance which occurred in his celebrated regiment, 'Probyn's Horse,' during the Sepoy mutiny in India. He was feeling for the enemy, and had ordered his troopers to scour a wood some distance away, he remaining on some high ground. He noticed soon after the leading files had entered the wood that a panic had set in, for the men were seen to be spurring their horses in hurried retreat. He concluded that they had come suddenly upon a large force of the enemy, and therefore it would probably be a desperate fight. When some of the leading troopers got near him he found they were being attacked by clouds of wasps or hornets. Some trooper had noticed a nest and thoughtlessly pricked it with his lance, whereupon the enraged insects sallied out and defeated the regiment.

* 'Heth and Moab,' pp. 160, 161.

was eleven feet. It seemed to me possible that it is to this solitary monument that the name of "Og's Throne" might be attached, and I here give the suggestion for what it is worth.'

Then follows the distribution of the conquered land to those tribes who, seeing that the land 'was a place for cattle,' wished not to settle the other side Jordan. The scenery is magnificent; we are told by travellers of wide upland pastures, of rich forests and fine streams, and these tribes had all along preserved their nomadic habits. Their flocks and herds seem to have been their sole possessions. Moses disliked the request; it seems a selfish one, and he shows them how it would 'discourage' the other tribes. It would be the 'little rift between' which would in time break up the commonwealth. They come again with another offer. They will build sheepfolds for their cattle, rebuild the destroyed cities (changing their names), so as to give safe abiding-places for their wives and children, while they themselves offer to go over armed, in front of the array. To these conditions Moses agrees, but it was an unhappy precedent of the sad division which happened long after. It shows that after all the wonderful works which God had wrought for them, they were only thinking of their own worldly goods, and had not seen that they were God's chosen instruments to chastise those nations whose 'iniquity' was now 'full.'

Sihon and Og being defeated, no forces now barred the way to the Promised Land; so Israel 'pitched in the plains of Moab, on this side Jordan, by Jericho.' The old name, 'plains of Moab,' had kept to these plains, though we know that they had been taken from Moab by the Amorites; the Amorites had been defeated; Moab, however, was not to be touched. They are now in 'Abel Shittim'—the meadow of the 'acacias,' now called Kefrein—rich meadow-land with marshy glades, where still grow acacia-trees, and which is described as being the 'largest and richest oasis' in the Jordan Valley. Their

camp extended towards the north to Beth Jeshimoth ('the house of desolations'), where the desert reigns: from the high tableland Balak, King of Moab, looks down on their camp; he had been left untouched. What, then, were his reasons for wishing to destroy Israel? Why did he send for Balaam? It was the hatred of heathenism to Jehovah. Heathens were willing to acknowledge Jehovah as '*the God of the Hebrews*,' but not willing to acknowledge Him as *the one only* true God—Lord of all. They would not hear that Chemosh or Baal were 'idols'; it was the conflict of light with darkness—the everlasting war which ever goes on with the true believer and the world. So the soothsayer Balaam is sent for: his name means 'devourer' or 'swallower-up'; his father's name, Beor, means 'burner-up' or 'destroyer.' This magician lives at Pethor, in Mesopotamia, and Balak was probably of Midianitish origin—for his father's name Zippor ('bird') reminds us of Oreb ('crow')—so there would be affinity between the two men. The character of Balaam is a difficult one to understand; he knew the right—for greed he sought the wrong. We see him in Scripture a monument of those who seek to do the impossible: 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.'

He comes to Balak from 'the high places of Baal'; he sees the people of Israel; seven altars are built; he is not permitted to curse—he blesses; he is taken to the 'field of Zophim to the top of Pisgah'; seven more altars are built; he is taken to the top of Peor; seven altars again are reared—the result is the same; he sees his defeat; he seeks no longer 'enchantments,' but lifts up his voice in parable. And now he is an inspired man and lifts the veil from the future; but he was an *unwilling* instrument. 'The Spirit of God came upon him'; he 'heard the words of God,' and was compelled to give them utterance: 'He maketh even His enemies to praise Him.' But though he could not curse, yet it was he who gave such

advice to Balak that the children of Israel were seduced into wickedness, and a plague followed (Num. xxxi. 16). Balaam comes to his end among the enemies of God. The women of Moab and the women of Midian had been the traps he set to seduce Israel. He joined himself to Midian, and when, by God's command, the latter are smitten with all their kings, the name of Balaam, the son of Beor, is amongst the slain (Num. xxxi. 8).

Having so far followed the Bible account, we can now take up modern discovery. Major Conder and the Palestine Exploration Fund's Survey party have made many interesting discoveries here. I give a brief description :* The high places to which Balaam was brought were three in number, each sacred to a Moabite deity, each commanding a more or less extensive view of the Jordan Valley. The first is Bamoth Baal, south of Nebo, and which is a 'bare hilltop'; next the Field of Zophim, now called Tal'at es Sufa—an Arabic name, identical with the Hebrew Zuph, whence Zophim. This is the old 'Field of Zophim,' or 'of views,' in the 'ascent of Zuph'—the field close to the Cairn of Nebo; and few places in Palestine are so well identified as this ridge. 'Zophim' is but another name for the Nebo ridge. Close to this place stands a huge dolmen, perfect and unshaken; others on the southern slope; another overturned on the west, close to the Cairn of Nebo; a great rude-stone circle on the southern slope, and quite close to another dolmen centre on the other side of the gorge. All prove we are here in the centre of altars.

The third station of Balaam was the 'Cliff of Peor, that looked toward Jeshimon,' and whence apparently the whole host of Israel was visible in the plains of Abel Shittim. The first, then, was the hill of Baal, the Sun-god; the second, that of Nebo or Mercury; the third, of Peor, the Priapus of Moab,

* 'Heth and Moab,' Conder.

who resembled the Egyptian Khem. At each site seven altars were raised: one to each of the seven *planetary gods*—the Cabiri of Phœnicia, whose aid was invoked *against* the God of Israel.

The third station evidently gave a more extensive view, and it could not have been far from the other two stations. Such a ridge we find immediately south of that of Bamoth Baal, in the narrow spur which runs out to Minyeh. The very name at once suggests a connection with Peor, for it means 'luck,' or 'desire,' and is intimately connected with that of Meni, or Venus, the proper wife of Peor; while a legend of a magic well, springing from the spear of 'Aly, attaches to the spot.

It was therefore a most interesting discovery to find, on the very edge of the cliff of Minyeh, a *line* of *seven* monuments of large stones, concerning which the Arabs have no traditions, only that they are very ancient. In each case a circle has existed, with a central cubical stone, such as the ancient Arabs used to consecrate to their chief female divinity, and each had originally a little court or enclosure on the east, where the worshipper stood with his face to the west, the proper quarter of Hathor (or Venus) in Egypt, the home of the evening aurora seen behind the mountains of Judah. The view from the 'Cliff of Peor' is more extensive than that from either Bamoth Baal or Nebo; it commands a complete view of the plains of Shittim, from Beth Jeshimoth to Nimrim, while on the south-west the watershed, sinking from Hebron towards the Beer-sheba desert, is more distinctly seen.

Standing on the lofty knoll just south of the seven circles, Balaam would be able to see all the camp of Israel. He could see Moab, Edom, and Jebus, the rocky nest of the Kenite, which comes as a peak on the south-western horizon. Here was pronounced the doom of those children of Sheth who

adored in Peor and Nebo, but other forms of the 'pillar,' Set, that idle god so sacred to Hittites and Egyptians also.

Cairns of huge size, stone circles, huge upright standing stones, are found in many places, but in this region they abound, and their position points to the fact that here, where Balaam was brought by Balak, was the very centre of the heathen worship. Some circles are 100 yards in diameter. Of the upright stones, called 'menhirs,' the most important group was found by the explorers at El Mareighât, then a square enclosure, an inner circle, a central group on the top of the knoll, and alignments on the west. The Arabs call them 'the smeared stones,' and there is little doubt that they were originally the objects of pagan worship—once anointed with oil or smeared with blood. There is no evidence to connect any of them with places of sepulchre. The main object of their erection seemed always to be the construction of a flat table, arranged with a slight tilt in the direction of its length. They are nearly always near streams of water—always in places where good views are to be got. Cup hollows are in the tables, or top stone. Sometimes channels are cut from the cup hollow, all irresistibly giving evidence that some sort of libation was poured on the stone.

At an earlier period, long before the law of Moses existed, the fathers of the Hebrew race seem to have used the same stone monuments, which were subsequently condemned in consequence of the cruel and shameless rites with which they were connected in Canaanite paganism. Jacob anointed a menhir. Moses even marked the altar in his circle under Sinai with the blood of oxen. Joshua made a circle at Gilgal, and the sons of Jacob a cairn on Gilead. The dolmen is not distinctly mentioned in Hebrew Scripture, but the libation on a rock, the sacrifice on a great stone—the raising of 'hands' or cippi—is attributed to venerated heroes of the Hebrew race: to Gideon, and Saul, and Jacob, not less than to later wor-

shippers of Peor and Chemosh, the names still adhering to these Syrian monuments. 'Smeared' stones, 'wishing' stones, stones of 'blood,' are valuable as showing the libations and bloody rites connected with dolmens and menhirs. To sum up, the menhir is the emblem of an ancient deity; the circle, a sacred enclosure; the dolmen, an altar; the cairn, not always sepulchral, but sometimes a memorial heap.* And it is not without interest to note that in Judæa '*not a single dolmen now remains standing*,' because, in their zeal for the faith of Jehovah, the good kings Hezekiah and Josiah in later years swept away for ever the 'tables of Gad.'

'It may seem a bold suggestion, but there appears nothing extravagant in the idea that the altars erected by Balaam, or some of them, are these very altars found by the exploring party.'

The days of Moses are numbered, but mindful ever of his 'duty,' he appoints three cities of refuge on this side Jordan, toward the sun-rising, that is, the east—'Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites' (Deut. iv. 43). The first has been identified by Palmer, and the ruins are about two miles south-west of Dibon; they are on a knoll, and are of some extent. Ramoth in Gilead is commonly identified with Es Salt. Major Conder does not agree with the identification of Es Salt with Ramoth, and points out that all we know of it is that it was a strong city in Mount Gilead, and also that at a later period chariots were employed in a battle near this city, which would be impossible at Es Salt. Dr. Merrill, of the American Survey, remarks that Es Salt would be in the middle of Gad's territory, which would not be appropriate, and, further, that Ramoth Gilead was a commissariat station, as we see from 1 Kings iv. 13. Gilead was

* See Major Conder's 'Syrian Stone Lore,' pp. 42, 47.

in existence in the days of Hosea (vi. 8). The Midrash on Samuel says 'Gerash' is 'Gilead,' and Dr. Merrill thinks the present Gerash is Ramoth Gilead. 'It would be suitable for a city of refuge, because it was on one of the main routes which would be kept open' (see Deut. xix. 3); 'it would be an appropriate point at which to station a commissariat officer who was to command Eastern Gilead and Bashan. Chariots could here be used. Jewish tradition says Ramoth was opposite Shechem; in this Gerash would agree. Jewish tradition again says Gerash is identical with Gilead.' 'It is now a ruined and deserted city, where over three hundred columns are still standing amid fallen temples and other splendid remains. There is a fine stream, a gate, a wall, a position of great strength—remains of the place which in the days of the Kings was of so much importance.'*

Golan in Bashan comes next, mentioned here by Joshua, and also in 1 Chronicles. It is never afterwards mentioned in the Bible. The American Survey party, who visited Bashan, consider that the site is to be found in Wâdy 'Allân. The Arabic represents the ancient Golan.† All over this country are ruined towns.

Moses, in spite of all entreaty, is forbidden to enter the Promised Land, and is ordered to go up 'into this mountain Abarim, Nebo,' at other times called Pisgah. Abarim is four times mentioned, and Pisgah four times, each alone. Pisgah is four times called 'Ashdoth Pisgah.' 'The streams of Pisgah,' now called by Arabs 'Springs of Moses,' is a picturesque spot, where a stream runs through a valley. The stream throws itself over a cliff thirty feet high. The hollow below is full of maiden-hair fern, and a large wild fig grows up against the cliff. When

* Dr. Merrill, 'East of Jordan.'

† Schumacher, 'Across the Jordan,' pp. 91-98, found a large village with important ruins, now called 'Sahem ej Jaulân,' which Arabs say was once 'the capital of Jaulân.'

Pisgah is mentioned alone, the Hebrew words mean 'top or summit of Pisgah.' Many have claimed to have stood on the spot on which Moses stood, but the exact spot is uncertain. The *ridge* of Nebo is known ; it runs out west from the plateau, sinking gradually, first a field of arable land, then a flat top ending in a summit called Siâghah, whence the slopes fall steeply on all sides. The word 'Nebo' or 'Neba' ('the knob' or 'tumulus' applies to the flat top with the cairn, and the name Tal'at es Sufa to the ascent leading up to the ridge from the north. Here we get the three Scripture words : Nebo, now Neba ; Siâghah, which is identical with the Aramaic Se'ath, the name Nebo is called in the Targum of Onkelos (Num. xxxii. 3) ; and third, Tal'at es Sufa, identical with Hebrew Zuph, the old 'field of Zophim' or 'views.' Pisgah is not known, but is thought to be another title of the Nebo ridge.* The view is much the same from the two first-mentioned positions. Let me now describe somewhat the view.

On the north-east the site of Heshbon is seen; a ridge hides the Sea of Galilee and Hermon. The northern half of the Dead Sea is visible. On the west the watershed of Judea and Samaria, while Bethlehem and Jerusalem and Herodium are clearly seen ; also the 'nest of the Kenite' on the south-west, and thence the ridge from which Abraham saw the smoke of Sodom. Olivet, Neby Samwîl, Mizpeh, Ophrah, and the ridge of Baal-Hazon, with its great oak-trees, are prominent objects. North again, Gerizim and Ebal, with the cleft between indicating Shechem ; then the lofty summit of 'Ezekiel's Mountain' —Bezek, where Saul numbered Israel. Tabor is said to be seen, but the lie of the ground renders that doubtful. Turn south : the lower hills and the Jordan Valley, Jericho, and the plain. The Jordan River, with the streams from Jericho ; the north shore of the Dead Sea. At our feet, Jordan, with its

* 'Heth and Moab,' Conder, pp. 131-138.

tamarisks and oleanders; then the 'meadow of acacias.' All explorers speak of the great haze which obscured their view, and to that, I presume, must be attributed the conflicting statements of Hermon and Tabor being in view. But enough has been said of this, the last view Moses had. He was told to go 'up into the mountain,' but he was '*buried in a valley*.' Deut. xxxiv. 6: 'No man knoweth of his sepulchre.' Jewish tradition says that the meaning of the words in Deuteronomy are, that 'Moses died by the kiss of the Lord.' But may we not infer that though Moses received in death the wages of sin, yet his body passed not through corruption, however much 'the devil,' contending as for his lawful prey, 'disputed'* for its possession, but was raised up to be with Elijah the first to welcome the Lord in His glory? For 'men bury a body that it may pass into corruption. If Jehovah, therefore, would not suffer the body of Moses to be buried by men, it is but natural to seek for the *reason* in the fact that He did not intend to leave him to corruption.'†

Moses went up the hill '*alone*'—alone, but with God. He had been his one Guide through all those weary years. No hand of man was to close those aged eyelids; no hand of man dug his grave. From first to last he and God were alone together.

'Moses led a people long crushed by tyranny to discipline and order. He taught of God, who is not "afar off," but a God of the living as well as of the dead—a God of the market-place as of the Temple. He did not say with the heathen religions, "Leave the world to itself that you may save your own soul," but rather, "Love God, keep His commandments, and do your duty to your neighbour."'

'No man knoweth of his sepulchre to this day.' 'The despoiled tombs of the Pharaohs mock the vanity that reared

* Jude 9. † Edersheim and Kurtz.

them. The name of the Hebrew who, revolting from their tyranny, strove for the elevation of his fellow-men, is yet a beacon light to the world.'

To this day Moses is a living power—a blazing light to all those who struggle and hope to raise the masses from their sorrow, and bring hope to the oppressed. If politicians in our day, faced by so many problems which demand solution, would but study the Mosaic institutions, they would the better be able to reconcile those conflicting claims which threaten such danger to the commonwealth.

CHAPTER III.

JOSHUA.

Moses, the great law-giver, the founder of Jewish politics, being dead, a different agent is chosen by Jehovah. We have heard of Joshua the son of Nun before. Now he steps into the front rank, for his work is that of the soldier, 'in whom is the Spirit' (Num. xxvii. 18). Though the Israelites were Divinely led, yet God works through man, and He selects His agents according to the work required. The work now to be done requires quite a different leader to Moses. 'God buries His agents, but carries on His work.' We may note here how often a 'soldier' is selected for commendation in holy writ. Joshua is a spendid type of a whole-hearted follower of the Lord; the motto of his life, the secret of his success, he gives in his last brave words:

'Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' Before we enter into the consideration of his conquests, it will be well to glance at the state of Palestine in his day. We know that when Abraham went through the land he found 'the Canaanite and the Perizzite.' That at Hebron he bought the Cave of Machpelah from the Hittite Ephron. But yet the country could not have been thickly inhabited, for he and Lot do not seem to have encountered any opposition when they divided the land at Bethel. Abraham says: 'Let there be no strife between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen.' The other inhabitants would seem not to have objected. Then how comes it that when the spies go up from Kadesh Barnea they on their return to the camp report: 'The people be strong that dwell in the land, and the *cities are walled and very great*'?* and further we shall see that as Joshua enters the

* Lachish (Josh. x. 5) was one of the five strongholds of the Amorites, and it continued to be one of the strongest places in the country down to the invasions of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar. In March, 1890, William M. Flinders Petrie landed in Palestine, to commence for the Palestine Exploration Fund some excavations to decide the true site of Lachish. His discoveries are of great value at the mound now called Tell Hesy. This mound is caused by ruins of successive towns built one over the other. The mound is bounded by a clay rampart, still seven feet high in parts, and in one place by a brick wall; the area is thirty acres. The mound proper is 200 feet square, forty-five to fifty-six feet of natural ground above the stream in the wâdy below, and on that the mass of dust and ruins of brick walls rises sixty feet. Excavations proved that the earliest town was of great strength and importance, the lowest wall of all being twenty-eight feet eight inches thick, of clay bricks, unburnt; and over this are two successive patchings of later rebuilding, altogether twenty-one feet of height remaining. This must be that Amorite city, for pottery of about 1100 B.C. is found above its level. Num. xiii. 28 says, 'The cities are walled and very great'; Deut. i. 28 says, 'Great and walled up to heaven.'

Fragments of Amorite pottery were found, and have been exhibited in London; rude walls, probably the time of the Judges; then a solid wall, thirteen feet thick, probably the time when Rehoboam fortified Lachish

country he finds Jericho 'walled'—Ai 'walled'; for is not the 'gate' spoken of? and 'cities' are continually spoken of. The explanation is the simple one that, as the children of Israel had gone down into Egypt a *family*, and had emerged a *nation*, so also, during that space of about 430 years—from Abraham's time to that of Joshua—the population and settlement of Canaan had also progressed—cities had been built, nations, 'greater and mightier' than Israel, had cultivated the land, and these were to be 'driven out': not 'for thy righteousness,' 'but for the wickedness of those nations,' was the word to Israel; and yet of the progress or affairs of those nations in the 430 years the Bible is silent. Egyptian records help us somewhat. Glancing at them, we now can see how God prepared the way—the future homes for the Israelites. While they were in bondage in Egypt, the Hittites, allied with other tribes, resisted the progress of the Egyptian Pharaohs, who at one time had overrun Canaan even to the Lebanon.

Rameses II., the oppressor of the Israelites, had waged war with these Hittites and their confederates. Pictures on the walls of the Memnonium, the palace temple of Rameses II., as well as at Thebes, tell the story; so also at Abu Simbal we can read the accounts of the battles and see, too, how powerful these nations were. Their great stronghold was Kadesh on the Orontes. The poem written by Pentaur, the Egyptian court poet, exists and shows how stern was the conflict. These Hittites had 2,500 chariots. Their city was walled and defended by a river and moats. The city is vividly portrayed on the walls of Abu Simbal. The people represented have long pigtails like Chinese. They have high caps on their heads.

(2 Chron. xi. 9); on the south side a massive brick wall, twenty-five feet thick, and of considerable height. This was built over a great glacis slope, formed of blocks of stone faced with plaster. The Amorite pottery found extends from 1500 to 900 B.C.

Their faces resemble Armenians. Their names appear to be Semitic. Their gods were Baal, Ashtoreth, and Set. These Hittites were a great and powerful race, as all Egyptian inscriptions show. Their solid sovereignty was broken by the Egyptians, and so we find in the days of Joshua that the country of Palestine was ruled over by *many* kings or petty kinglets, sheikhs of tribes, who represented that once great empire which is now known as 'Hittite.' Major Conder has discovered the ruins of the city, Kadesh on the Orontes, represented on the Egyptian monuments. The site and the ruins vividly recall the sculptured scenes at Abu Simbal. So while the Israelites were in bondage a great empire had grown up in Canaan. That empire was shattered by the Egyptians, and it was therefore only its broken fragments that Joshua had to encounter. They did try on one or two occasions to reunite, but compact union was impossible. In their scattered 'kingdoms' they resembled those small cometary bodies which astronomers think are but fragments of some large planet, shattered by some celestial convulsion. Merely to have a glimpse of these events enables us to see the patience of God, the steady working out of His purpose; how that rocky land was first made fruitful by the labours of nations who, forsaking Him, wrought their own destruction, and yet prepared the way for the chosen race. One race labours, and another enters into the fruit of their labours.

Though Joshua knew that the Lord was with him, yet he omits no precautions; a skilful commander, he does not despise his adversary, so he sends 'two spies.' Probably in Egypt he had learned the art of war. He had certainly known what servitude was, and in some way his military skill had shown itself, for in the desert he had been the chosen leader of that force which resisted the attack of the Amalekites. The spies go to the house of Rabab, which house was on the city

wall. They are tracked by men sent by the King of Jericho, and by woman's wit are saved, for she hid them under stalks of flax which were spread out on the flat roof. Flax and barley were ripe at the same time in the Jordan Valley. The spies escape to the mountains behind Jericho. These barren mountains are full of natural caves. They hide there three days; then the fords are no longer watched, and the men regain their camp. Rahab, living close to the Jordan fords, on the highway to Egypt and Babylonia, probably had heard the whole story of the Exodus and the after-events. She carried on a trade in linen, for she had flax—a dyer too, for she had a *scarlet* line to let down. ('Babylonish garments' were among the spoils of Jericho.) The suggestion that Rahab kept an inn or khan has no supporting facts. She lived in her own house, and we must remember that 'harlotry' was not considered a *sin* by the heathen. She had faith, which 'was counted to her for righteousness.' Salmon* afterwards married her. Very probably he had been one of the 'spies,' and from her and her descendants came Him who, sinless Himself, yet became sin for us, that He might take away all sin. Gentile and sinner as this woman was, she had grasped the great truth: 'The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath.' So she was saved by faith.

Joshua now ordered the host to form in marching array; he mentions by name the nations to be driven out of the land: 'Canaanites' ('*Lowlanders*'), then Hittites—that great nation of whom we have spoken—then 'Hivites.' This people lived in the hill country, north of Jerusalem. The word is said to mean '*midlander*' or '*villager*.' 'The Perizzites'—'*rustics*' living in 'country villages.' They lived in the centre of Palestine. Nothing is known of the 'Girgasites' or the 'Amorites,' '*mountaineers*' or '*hillmen*'; these were found on both

* See 'Salmon,' Smith's 'Bible Dictionary.'

sides of the Jordan, taking their name from the hill country they inhabited. 'The Jebusites,' inhabitants of Jerusalem and the surrounding hills. Now the ark is to go forward, carried by priests. The Jordan was in flood at the time; it was barley harvest. But how is this? We know that our rivers get smaller in the hot weather. Yes, but Jordan, rising at Banias, its springs fed by the melting snow on Mount Hermon, increases in volume as the hot weather approaches. Its name 'Jordan,' 'Descender,' truly indicates its torrent character. A most winding stream, full of rapids and cascades, it hurries on its turbid course to its grave in the Dead Sea. Not navigable by boats, no city of importance on its bank, it fertilizes those banks, but flows through a desert. It has *three* banks: one, the bed of the stream when it is low; then comes an extent of soft banks of sloping sedimentary deposit; above the edge of this second 'bank,' the third, a dense thicket of jungle, tree, bush, and rush, the haunt of wild boar, wolves, and other animals—the home of waterfowl. Not like the Nile in *its* overflow, which fertilizes the land, the Jordan merely hurries on so rapidly that its fall is sixty* feet to the mile; difficult to approach in many places, impossible in others, because of the jungle and banks. It yet has many fords; in some places there are cliffs, old deposits of marl, which crumble and fall into the river in time of flood. It was therefore at flood-time (April) that Joshua led the Israelites through the river. The 'spies' had crossed by the ford, but no 'ford' would be broad enough for the host to pass; so as the Israelites left Egypt and crossed the 'sea of reeds' by a miracle, so now their children cross this torrent stream by another miracle.

* 'Tent Work in Palestine,' Conder, pp. 35, 36, shows that in twenty-six and a half miles the Jordan falls sixty feet to the mile; then for another portion the fall is forty feet to the mile; then for ten miles ninety feet of fall, and for the last ten miles about nine feet per mile.

The water stood still near 'the city of Adam, that is beside Zaretan.' The Revised Version translates this passage thus: 'The waters which came down from above stood and rose up in one heap—*a great way off at* Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan.' The meaning of 'Adam' is 'red earth.' Near Beisân is an unusually large mound called Tell es Sârem. A good deal of clay is found here, and a mile to the south is a stream, the Arabic of which means 'red river.' The soil is red, and a ford near is also called by an Arabic name which means 'red earth.' 'It has been suggested that the waters of the Jordan were suddenly dammed up by a landslip or similar convulsion. The appearance of the banks, and the curious bends of the river near this place, would seem to support the idea.' There is another mound called 'Tell Dâmieh' near, which is a huge mound, composed of pottery and loose stones. It is clear from the Bible statement that the waters were arrested a long way off, above Jericho. The river opposite Jericho being dry, there was ample space for the host to cross and to camp on the level plain, for Jericho must have stood at the foot of the Judæan mountains, barring the road to the interior; and the city was watered by the strong springs, one of which is known as 'Dûk,' and the other the 'Springs of Elisha.'

The host camp at Gilgal 'circle,' taking its name from the twelve great stones which had been taken out of Jordan The name 'Gilgal' has been recovered by Major Conder. The Arabs consider the place sacred, and bury their dead near a large tamarisk-tree which grows there. There are about a dozen small mounds, seemingly artificial. Are these traces of the Israelite camp? One of the mounds goes by the name of Tell Jiljûlieh. For a permanent camp there must have been water near. Major Conder found that a stream ran right through these Tells, or mounds. The tree spoken of is said by the

Arabs to mark the site of the 'City of Brass.' Many traditions exist—one that a great leader rode round the city, and then the walls fell. This site would be about two miles from Gilgal. Great mounds exist at Jericho. They have been examined by Sir C. Warren, but only courses of sun-burnt brick were found, with fragments of pottery. Sun-burnt brick was the usual material for building in the Jordan Valley. The ruined city would therefore naturally become those 'shapeless heaps'* which all travellers notice on this Jordan plain, close to the hills. Several great events mark the camp at Gilgal. There the Israelites were circumcised—a rite which had been in disuse all through the forty years' wandering. Manna ceased, the passover was eaten, and Joshua had had a renewed promise that the Lord God was with him.

The recorded story tells of the careful commander. He is going his rounds, looking after his camp; he sees a 'man' who has his 'sword drawn.' Full of high courage, Joshua at once challenges him, and then he is told that as 'Captain' or 'Prince' of the host of the Lord he has come. Joshua is assured his victory is certain, and by God's hand alone. He is told how to use it. The walls of the city fall; again the children of Israel have nothing to do themselves; God does all for them; they were to 'stand still and see what God wrought.'

The Jericho of Christ, of the Crusaders, was not erected on this site. The present village is the miserable one of Eriha, the inhabitants of which are as miserable as their dwellings, though quite lately the Russians have erected a hospice, and for tourists there is an inn, and some modern villas are being

* Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake remarked, in a report found after his death, that many of the Tells or ruins in the Jordan Valley must have been strongholds; that their steep slopes show that they were fortified cities, and that in some cases the mass of débris was quite 10,000 tons. These Tells always exist near a good supply of water, and often at the mouths of passes. The Tells are steeper than those heaps in Egypt on which villages are built.

raised; for at certain seasons it is said the air of the Jordan Valley is beneficial. Speaking from experience, I should wonder when that 'season' occurs, for to my mind few places can be more unhealthy than Eríha.

Jericho having fallen, the two passes that city commanded are now open. Joshua sends spies up the northern pass to get accurate information as to the strength of Ai and the general lie of the ground. It is most intricate—numbers of hills all bearing a strong resemblance to each other, all difficult to climb. The spies, encouraged by the easy conquest of Jericho, report that only a small picked corps of 3000 men is necessary; having a vivid remembrance of their own toils in exploring the pass and the hills around Ai, they wish to spare the people 'labour.' The small corps is sent and defeated! They had tried to carry the city by a rush at the 'gate'; they had been driven back 'even unto Shebarim,' 'a fracture' or 'fissure,' some ridge near the steep precipice of the pass up which the corps had ascended. It is impossible to say whereabouts that 'fracture' is, for the whole country is so broken up by ridges that it is useless to try to fix a place. Some translators think the word 'Shebarim' means 'quarries,' but that, again, does not help us, for the hills all about have at some time been used for quarrying purposes; anyhow, it was on the way to the great pass. Joshua and the people lose heart. All past victories appear to have been at once forgotten, and they never seem to have thought that it was their own fault or sin. Any blame they give to God, and cry, 'What wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?' Greed of gold had been the sin of Achan—'a Babylonish garment,' shekels of silver and a wedge of gold, had tempted him, though all spoil had been forbidden. Achan was stoned to death in the Valley of Achor. 'They brought them *up* into the Valley of Achor' implies that this valley was on a higher level than the

Gilgal camp. Most likely it was that gorge now called Wâdy Kelt, which leads up from the plain to Ai and Bethel. Stones abound there, while none are on the plain.

If Joshua was misled by his spies on his first essay upon Ai, he made no mistake of that kind again. He selects a picked corps of 30,000 men, and sends them up the pass by night. The previous examination of the ground would show them where they could ambush, while he goes up with the main body for a seemingly front attack. His strategy had to be governed by the fact that the city to be attacked has 'walls,' and the Jews had no war engines. All happens as he planned. Joshua remains in the 'valley,' having, in fact, placed two ambushes. The city is taken. Many attempts have been made to identify Ai, but to the Palestine Fund explorers is due the honour of discovering the true site. One site which has misled many is a ruin called 'Et Tell,' and as we are told that Joshua 'made Ai a heap,' it was thought this particular spot was Ai. A ruin called Haiyân was, however, found south of Et Tell. Here large rock-hewn reservoirs with tombs and cisterns prove this site to be of importance and antiquity; to the north is a rugged ravine; to the east the desolate desert of Bethaven; to the west is Bethel, two miles distant, and *between* the two sites is the open ravine called 'The Valley of the City,' where, unseen, yet close at hand, the ambush may have lain concealed beneath the low cliffs, or among the olive groves, after creeping across from the northern valley behind the rocky swell which runs out to the mound of 'Et Tell.' This latter place has no valley in which the ambush could hide. 'Haiyân' would, moreover, command the road into the interior, hence the importance of capturing Ai. The men of Bethel went out to help Ai, and it is strange that Bethel does not seem to have been taken at the same time. We note the capture of Bethel is recorded in Josh. xii. 9-16, but that would appear to have

been later. After Joshua's feigned retreat the ambush would be able to advance under cover of those olive groves. Not until the smoke arose did the people of Ai know that their city was taken. The great valley which has its head west of Ai curves round to the eastward and runs to Jericho; in some places it becomes a narrow gorge, with cliffs 800 feet high, quite concealed from all observation, and so up this pass the ambush could march unseen, till near the site of Ai ('Haiyân'); then its sides slope upwards by easy ascent. Having the two keys of the country, Jericho and Ai, Joshua now turns north to capture the heart of the country, with all the rich plains which were to be the portion of Ephraim. Nothing is more striking to the traveller, even now, when he has climbed the high ridge of the watershed which separates the rounded hills and shut-in valleys of Bethel and Ai—that comparatively barren country—than the great change a few miles of travel brings about: corn lands of great extent and fine woods of olive-trees, culminating in the central position of Shechem. The 'terebinths of Moreh' of Abraham's time are gone; but noble trees of olive, fig, and pomegranate have taken their place. Water is abundant, and therefore fertilizing mist is common. It would be a great feeding-ground for the host of Israel, and was the abode of those Perizzites, 'rustics,' who do not appear to have had fortified towns. Joshua rears an altar, and afterwards read all the words of the law. The hills form a great amphitheatre, space and verge enough for all, a natural sounding gallery for Joshua's voice; every traveller can testify of this. I found that, standing on the slopes of Ebal, my men across the valley and on Gerizim could distinguish all I said.

Interesting discoveries on both these mountains have been made by the officers of the Palestine Exploration Fund, Sir Charles Wilson, Major Anderson, and Major Conder. Of Ebal, the first-mentioned explorer says:

'The summit of Ebal is a comparatively level plateau of some extent; there is no actual peak, but the ground rises towards the west. The view is one of the finest in the country, embracing Safed, Jebel Jermŭk, and Hermon on the north, Jaffa, Ramleh and the maritime plain on the west, the heights above Bethel on the south, and the Hauran plateau on the east. There is a ruin consisting of an enclosure ninety-two feet square, with walls twenty feet thick, built of selected unhewn stones, without mortar. Nothing in this building connects it with the altar erected by Joshua.' Major Conder calls attention to a Moslem sacred site on the ridge of the mountain, not at its highest point, which is called the 'Monument of the Faith,' and he thinks this the true site of the altar. Samaritan tradition places the altar on *Gerizim;* 'but this title, "Monument of the Faith," may be due to the idea the Crusaders had, that this was the Dan of Jeroboam's Calf Temple.'* We must not confuse the 'altar' built by Joshua with the 'great stone' which he afterwards set up; but if we are to take the passage in Josh. xxiv. 26 as indicating the site of the 'altar,' then it was not *on* the hill, but in the valley, for the 'great stone' was put up 'under the oak that was by' (or in) 'the sanctuary of the Lord,' and this oak would probably be Abraham's oak. The heathen did erect altars and burn sacrifices on every high hill; but, as at Shiloh, the places selected for the altars to Jehovah were in valleys.

Canon Tristram† points out that 'in the base of Mount Gerizim is a very curious natural recess, eastwards of the modern city, so regular that it looks as if hollowed artificially out of the rocky roots of the mountain, now a sacred enclosure of the Moslems, and called "The Pillar." Exactly opposite, in the base of Mount Ebal, is a similar natural amphitheatre.'

* Conder's 'Tent Life,' pp. 68-70.

† Canon Williams was the first to point out 'The Pillar.'

Only Moslems are allowed to enter the enclosure on the Gerizim side, and they say there still stands a column. Modern Samaritans also assert that this is the true site of the 'great stone' set up by Joshua. Two hundred years after Joshua we read of 'the OAK of the *pillar that was* in Shechem' (Jud. ix. 6). Fourth-century writers speak of a 'praying place outside the city resembling a theatre.'

We are told Joshua wrote on the stones of the altar 'a copy of the law of Moses.' Does that mean that he *engraved* the whole law on the stones? No. If we refer to Deut. xxvii. 2, 3, we shall see that the stones were to be covered with 'plaister,' and on this 'plaister,' the words would be written; the process, therefore, would be both easy and rapid. There is a great contrast between the barrenness of Mount Ebal and the fertility of Gerizim. That may be due a good deal to the position of them. Ebal is steeper, and is the northern hill; Gerizim, the southern hill, so that was chosen for the mount of blessing, 'life and light' being always associated with the *south* by the Jews. Gerizim was afterwards chosen by the Samaritans for the site of their temple, and they claim, too, that it was the mountain on which Abraham offered up Isaac. This latter view has obtained some credence, but an examination of the Bible will show it could not be. Abraham was at Beersheba. It would be possible to reach Mount Moriah, Jerusalem, in the *three days* spoken of; quite impossible to reach Shechem in that time, for, remember, Abraham travelled on an *ass*. The distance alone between the two places is fatal to this theory, which was invented by the Samaritans to glorify the temple they had set up in opposition to that on Mount Moriah. Standing on the plain, a small Moslem tomb cuts the sky-line on the crest of Gerizim, and here are many ruins, with massive foundations: traces of a castle, some massive stones, called the 'Twelve Stones,' which Samaritan traditions say were the

stones set up by Joshua; and numerous cisterns. The 'Holy Place' of the Samaritans is a sloping rock, which drains into a cistern. A mass of human bones was found lying in another enclosure. These 'Twelve Stones' form a platform of unhewn masonry. The courses are four in number; no inscriptions were found on them. This platform is probably a portion of the Samaritan temple. Other ruins exist, most likely remains of the fortress Justinian erected there. Then there is the Samaritan 'Holy of Holies,' for the people take off their shoes when they approach it. The Passover is still eaten there, but the community is becoming very small.

'Towards sunset a few men in white surplices recite a form of prayer near the circular pit in which the lambs are roasted; then all the full-grown men join, prayer and prostrations continue till sunset, when the priest rapidly repeats the twelfth chapter of Exodus. The lambs are killed while the priest is speaking; they are skinned and cleaned, the bodies then placed in the pit till roasted; then the covering is taken off, the bodies drawn out and placed on brown mats; then they are taken to the trench and laid out in line between the two files of the Samaritans, who now have shoes on their feet and staves in their hands. Short prayers follow. They suddenly seat themselves, and commence to eat silently and rapidly, until the whole is consumed.'*

Sir Charles Wilson mentions one fact as to the distance the human voice can here be heard: that 'during the excavations on Mount Gerizim, the Arab workmen were on more than one occasion heard conversing with men passing along the valley below.'

It has been suggested† that there must be some portion of

* See also 'Tent Life,' Conder; and Dean Stanley's 'Jewish Church,' Appendix III.

† Major Conder.

the Book of Joshua lost, because the first eight chapters record in full the taking of Jericho and Ai, and then, without any further account, we are told of the erection of the altar at Ebal. The Septuagint version does add a brief account after the taking of Ai: 'When all the kings which were on this side Jordan in the hills, and in the Shephelah (the plains), and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon . . . heard . . . they gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua and with Israel with one accord.' But as the Bible mentions 'Perrizites'—'rustics'—as inhabiting that portion of the country between Ai and Ebal—a distance in a straight line of thirty miles—may we not presume that these 'rustics' had no fortified towns, and gave Joshua no trouble?

Joshua now returned to the permanent camp at Gilgal, doubtless leaving strong detachments to secure the conquered places, and put his commissariat, no doubt, on a sound footing before undertaking new exploits. His victories had alarmed the kings, or petty sheikhs, of the land, and they formed a great league against him. While they were doing this the chiefs of four cities had gone to work 'wilily' (Josh. ix. 4). Never, perhaps, does the Eastern love of deceit and intrigue come out more strongly than in the story recorded. Men appear at Gilgal with old garments, 'rent' shoes, mouldy bread, old sacks, and worn-out water-bottles, professing to have come from a 'far country' through hearing of the wonders God had wrought. What a hunt-up of old clothes there must have been! How glibly the lies tripped off their tongues! It is said of Easterns now that they will never tell the truth if it be possible to tell a lie! And these Gibeonites were past-masters in the art of lying. The frank soldier is trapped; he eats with them; their lives are now sacred; they are friends. To this day this old custom has come down. Get an Eastern to eat with you, and unless he forswears his implied oath, you are safe.

While Joshua, as every good commander, was again spying out the land, the league against him had taken form. In their journeys the Jews had explored that hilly country which exists between Ai and Gibeon, and therefore had discovered the trick by which they had entered into a league with the sheikhs of Gibeon and its towns. Joshua could not go back from his oath. He restrained the anger of the elders of the people, and these allies were condemned to servitude : 'hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and altar' (Josh. ix. 7). Captives taken in war from time to time augmented their ranks. Well might the kings of Southern Canaan take the alarm, for Gibeon was another of those natural keys which kept the passes *south.* An examination of the ground will enable us to understand where these confederate sheikhs came from. One from Jebus, 'Jerusalem,' which city would be outflanked if Gibeon were held in force ; one from Hebron, far south. Then 'Jarmuth.' This was a city in the Shephelah, the 'low hills' of Judah, afterwards called Remeth, now called Yarmûk ; a mound or Tell exists here. Then 'Lachish,' which must have been a stronger city than the others, for it took 'two days' to capture it—now thought to be represented by Tell el Hesy ('hillock of the water-pit') ; this also commands the hill passes. Lastly, Eglon, now called 'Ajlân, a low Tell with scattered stones. The ruins are extensive, and extend over a plateau which is now cultivated. The names of the sheikhs of these cities have the following meanings : Adoni Zedek, 'my *Lord Righteousness*' ; Hoham, 'the *Jehovah of the multitude*' ; 'Piram,' '*coursing about*,' *wild, free ;* Japhia, '*exalted*,' Debir, '*scribe*.' This southern array makes war against Gibeon ; in hot haste these people send to Joshua, who, with a picked army corps, starts immediately up the same pass by which he ascended to attack Ai. So secretly was his night-march conducted, that he was in position well on the flank of the

confederates as the morning broke. None could stand before the rush of the Israelites. Surprised, outflanked, terror-stricken, the hostile army fled. Standing on the high ground of Neby Samwîl, you look down on Gibeon, now called 'El Jib,' and the whole surrounding country is spread out like a raised map. Gibeon is an isolated hill of terraced limestone rock, conical in shape, and though now, in these days of artillery, its position would be commanded by higher ground, yet that higher ground is so far off, that in old days it could justly claim to be a 'royal city,' for it commanded the passes, while broad valleys and plains lie at its foot. It is abundantly supplied with water, for there are eight springs, one a very fine one, called 'Spring of the Village,' which issues from a rock chamber, thirty feet long, seven feet wide, and seven feet high. The water is clear and abundant. Many rock-cut chambers, caves, and tombs exist. One spring and its chamber is much venerated by the Moslems —a very large tank, probably the 'Pool of Gibeon,' where Abner's and Joab's men met. A spring near gives a small supply of *salt* water, and on the hill are Crusading ruins of a church. Such is the position of the principal city of the Gibeonites. Beyond that, and looking north, in the folds of the hills, you can see the position of Beeroth ('Wells'), which is about two miles south-west of Bethel. It was the most northerly of the four cities, about ten miles from Jerusalem; its present name, El Bîreh; a fine spring exists here, which flows out and forms a small rivulet. It has some interesting ruins, one a portion of a Crusading church. The land about is fertile. 'Chephirah,' identified with the ruins of Kefîreh; about two miles west of Ajalon, 'Kirjath Jearim,' 'City of Forests,' a site which has been much disputed, some thinking it to be the present village of Abu Ghôsh, where there are some good stone houses, olive groves, and ruins of a Christian church. In the fifth century this place was thought to be

Kirjath Jearim, but Major Conder has fully examined the evidences, both of the ground and language, and he believes the true site is Khŭrbet Erma. This site is concealed by thickets of lentisk, oak, hawthorn, and other shrubs; it is in the mountains; the ruins are on a knoll. This city afterwards was the place where the Ark was kept for twenty years. We will again recur to its identification. These four Gibeonite cities were therefore all *hill cities*, and not far apart. It therefore was in those plains at the foot of Gibeon where the Hivites were surprised by Joshua. The Bible tells of their flight past *two* Beth-horons: 'the ascent of Beth-horon,' and 'the going down of Beth-horon.' These places still exist, and are called by Arabic names, meaning 'upper' and 'lower.' They are separated by about half an hour's journey. The upper village is about four miles from Gibeon, the road always on the *ascent*. The *descent* begins from the upper to the lower village, and that road is one of the roughest and steepest in Palestine; it is still used as the road from the coast, and is a key to the country; it was afterwards fortified by Solomon. Old tanks and massive foundations exist. The view from the ridge is a glorious one; you look over all the lower hill country to the plain and sea beyond. The pass is contracted, and you can easily see how the defeated host were caught as in a trap. Camped on that ridge, I read the whole account in Joshua. The country in a most marvellous manner explained the whole circumstances of the battle. Behind you, eastward, you could see the mountain wall of Moab, which showed where the camp of Gilgal was placed. In the blue folds of shadow among the hills you could trace the pass up which the night-march was taken. You could see how deadly a flank attack would be, and then that the defeated host, huddled up and driven one upon another, had no room to deploy or extricate themselves from their confusion —driven over the rocky ground at Beth-horon. Penned up,

there was nothing for them but flight, the victors overtaking them in the intricate passes which alone give access to the lower hills. Their panic was increased by the terrible hail-storm which, as at Crecy, drove on the beaten host. We then get that extract from the Book of Jasher, 'the upright' or 'pious,' which in the language of poetry, aided by fervid Eastern imagination, bursts out into that invocation to sun and moon. It is a quotation from a *poem*, not a *fact of history*, which is recorded. But may we not say that, like every true poet, the singer records a natural phenomenon? A wave of intense cold in that hot country produced this terrible hail-storm. Such occurrences are not uncommon even now in Syria. It is always at a time of *intense* cold that refraction of the sun occurs.* Travellers in the Polar regions give many instances when the sun is seen for *several days*, when they know the orb is one degree *below* the horizon. This refraction of the sun is quite a common thing; and so it appeared to the conquering Israelites *as if the sun* 'hasted not to go down about a whole day.'

The routed army flies to Azekah. Major Conder proposes to identify it with a place called 'The Monastery of the Lover,' the south side of the valley of Sorek. Cisterns and caves exist, but the site is overgrown with weeds and thistles. It is in the natural line of flight of the fugitives. M. Ganneau suggests another site: the sheikhs hide in Makkedah. Sir Charles Warren identifies this with the present 'El Mŭghâr.' A site so important requires a fuller explanation. It must have been eight to ten hours from Gibeon (that is, under thirty miles); it should also be on the natural route southwards. It must have caves—the Arabic word means 'caves.' It is the only site in the plain where caves occur. Caves of many sizes exist. The present houses are built over and in front of some. Fine

* Captain Bedford Pim, R.N., 'Marine Pocket-Case,' p. 474.

corn-lands extend east and west. There is eastwards a precipitous slope, in which is found, and only here, a cave, which, curiously enough, has *five* loculi rudely scooped in its sides. 'The site seems well to answer the requirements of the case. Hidden from view, and perched high above the route of their pursuers, the five sheikhs would have looked down in fancied security on the host hurrying beneath on the highroad to Azekah and Gath, and other "fenced cities." The fact of their discovery and capture *before* the taking of the town would show that it was to one of the small caves outside the city to which they had retired. These caves are generally very small. Some are broken away in front, and others filled in; but two, at least, can be pointed out wherein five men might crowd, and the entrances of which could easily be blocked with the "great stones" which lie scattered about.'* The village is about eight miles from Ramleh. The day of the execution of the sheikhs the city was taken; the few remaining inhabitants of Libnah are destroyed. 'Lachish,' being stronger, delays Joshua 'two days.' The Sheikh of Gezer, now called 'Tell Jezar,' tries to raise the siege; he is defeated and slain. Eglon shares the fate of the other cities, and so does 'Hebron' and its villages. 'Debir' falls, and then Joshua sweeps southward to Kadesh Barnea—such the far-reaching consequences of the victory of Gibeon.

A more dangerous foe now comes from the north. Jabin, King of Hazor, heads a huge array—'much people;' 'horses and chariots very many.' An enumeration of the leaders shows that the whole *northern* side of Canaan had taken alarm. Hazor ('enclosed') is best represented by Hadîreh, which is the exact Arabic equivalent of the Hebrew word. It is near Kades, in Upper Galilee, on the mountains which look down on the waters of Merom. It is a bare, rocky hillock, the

* Major Conder.

ascent to it one of the most rugged in Palestine; it was the capital of the chief who headed this new league. It would naturally be one of the strongest positions, and so we find that it alone was burnt with fire and utterly destroyed. Madon is next named. This is probably represented by the village of Madîn, near Hattin, west of the Sea of Galilee. Then Shimron, now called Semûnieh, a small village five miles west of Nazareth, where there are mounds, traces of ruins. East of the site is a small isolated hill, which commands the plain in every direction, and was once surrounded on its summit by a wall, traces of which remain. This hill is scarped on the east; there are heaps of débris, a sarcophagus, and ruins of a Christian church. Achshaph, a village now called Kefr Yasîf, six miles north-east of St. Jean d'Acre; old rock-cut cisterns and an olive-press exist. There are chiefs also of the north, from Naphtali; chiefs of the 'Arabah, 'the Plain,' south of the Sea of Galilee; from the sea-coast at Dor, now called Tantura. Canaanites from the east and west, with Amorite, Hittite, Perizzite and Jebusite, and far away from the north, under Hermon, the Hivite. In this cumbersome league we get traces of Egyptian influence; for horses and chariots are new foes for the Israelites to meet. Long years before, the Egyptian hosts had swept through Canaan, and had reached Damascus, Hermon, and the far north: they had conquered the Hittites at Kadesh, on the Orontes, and held a chain of fortified posts through the land. We can get some idea of the state of the country from a record left by an Egyptian military officer,* who traversed the country shortly before its conquest by Joshua. 'He goes as far north as Aleppo in a chariot.' He has his clothes stolen at night; his own groom joins the robbers. He visits many Phœnician cities, and speaks of Tyre as being built on an island in the

* See Conder's 'Handbook to the Bible,' pp. 277, 280.

sea—drinking-water being conveyed to it in boats—Tabor, the fords of Jordan, Beth Shean, and of a 'passage' in front of the city of Megiddo, which had to be crossed before the town could be entered. Joppa *was then surrounded by date-palms.* The roads are often bad; one runs at the edge of a precipice of 2,000 cubits, full of rocks and boulders; his chariot is smashed, and has to be repaired by the 'iron workers.' From Jaffa he goes by way of Rehoboth and Raphia and Gaza back to Egypt. His account shows that the Egyptian name had great power in a land which they did not at that moment occupy. The mountains were covered with woods, and full of wild beasts. He shows a country full of cities, with riches and temples, kings, soldiers, scribes, chariots and horsemen, artisans and traders. All the Egyptian records of Canaan prove a high state of civilization: enormous flocks of sheep, horses, goats; huge quantities of corn, figs, vines; precious stones, gold, bronze; chairs of gold, tables of ivory, of cedar; oil, wine, incense, dates, implements of warfare, armour, and a 'galley'! A list far greater in extent might be made from the Egyptian monuments, which show what a prosperous land Canaan was just before the Israelites invaded it.

Joshua is told not to be afraid of the horses and chariots; and so again, with the swiftness which is characteristic of all his movements, he falls upon this huge host 'suddenly,' probably again by a night surprise, and they are utterly defeated. They seem to have fled in three directions, one body going north-west to Zidon, another south-west to Misrephoth-maim, the 'smelting pits by the waters'; the third fled to Mizpeh. All are 'chased' and smitten; none are left. The horses killed, the chariots burned. One battle finished that campaign. On his way back Joshua took Hazor and burnt it with fire, but the 'cities that stood on their mounds' he spared. These would probably be unwalled villages, not requiring large garrisons.

The 'great Zidon' of the text, sometimes called Sidon ('fishery'), now called Saida, about twenty miles from Tyre. It was the parent city of Tyre, a strong place, so the defeated Canaanites would naturally fly to it for safety. It is mentioned in Homer, and was the cradle of the world's commerce. Sarepta is identified as the 'smelting pits of the waters,' or 'burning of the waters,' evidently a name given it from its manufactory of glass; for the ancients assert that hereabouts glass was first made.*

'The land of Mizpeh' is the great plain or hollow west of Mount Hermon, in which are situated the ruins of Baalbek. 'The waters of Merom' now are called 'the Lake of Huleh,' a small lake which receives the waters of the Upper Jordan. It is about three miles in every direction, covered with weeds and papyrus-rush—a great haunt of water-fowl. There is a plain at the south-west of it. It is, however, difficult to imagine that Jabin could have chosen so bad a position for his army. There would be little room for the chariots. Josephus says the army was assembled at Beeroth, not far from Kades in Galilee. If so, then Joshua's victory was on the plain of Acre, and the pursuit to Sidon would be natural. Three miles from the lake is an isolated hill, where there are traces of fortifications, and Sir Charles Wilson considers this the city of Hazor.

A summary is then given of the extent of the country conquered by Joshua. Let us briefly examine it. 'All the south': that is now called the Negeb. 'The land of Goshen': not the Egyptian Goshen, but a tract between Gaza and Gibeon, its name probably given in remembrance of Egypt. 'The Lowland and the Arabah': the great plains from the Red Sea

* In the paintings at Beni Hassan, workmen are represented blowing glass bottles. The latest researches go to prove that the Egyptians invented glass, and that the Phœnicians were not the first inventors, but merely bartered the glass they got from the Egyptians.

to the Dead Sea. The name is also often applied to the Jordan Valley. 'The hill country of Israel and the Lowland': from Mount Halak. 'Smooth Mountain,' which has not been identified. Its position must be near Seir, in the south. 'Baal Gad'; that is the valley of the Lebanon in the north. It is true Seir, which means 'rough mountain,' might have been the name given to the district near Kirjath Jearim, which country is so rugged.

Then the Anakim in the hill country are smitten. The name means 'long-necked.' They were dwellers in the south country, and were a giant race—those who so frightened the spies. They are represented on Egyptian monuments as tall and fair. Their chief city was Hebron. 'Debir,' which was in the hill country near Hebron, afterwards called Kirjath Sepher, which some authorities translate 'city of the book'; but Conder thinks it means 'city on the ridge,' and proposes to identify it with a village south-west of Hebron.

Anab, belonging to the Anakim, ten miles south of Hebron, now called 'Anab.' An extensive ruin on a flat ridge. Caves, rock-cut cisterns, wine-presses, and heaps of stones; also ruins of a church earlier than Crusading times, two and a half miles west of Debir. The hill country of Judah and the hill country of Israel: this means the tract of country which was afterwards divided among those tribes.

Three cities were *not* taken—Gaza, Gath, Ashdod. Of these we shall see more hereafter. The conquest of the land north and south had taken seven years, as we see from Josh. xiv. 10.

It was forty-five years since the spies returned to Kadesh. Thirty-eight had been spent in the wanderings, so seven years must have been the time the conquest took, 'and the land had rest from war.'

Such are the broad outlines of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua. The details have to be filled in. We see that the

land was not completely subdued, and many fastnesses of the Canaanites remained. Joshua was old. The tribal division of the Israelites was another source of weakness. We saw it begin before the tribes crossed the Jordan, and so it came about that much yet remained to be done. The invaders had had brilliant victories, but they had not followed them up, and, as we shall soon see, those old inhabitants who had made their escape gave new trouble, because 'there remained yet very much land to be possessed.'

That 'land' is named. Let us examine it, first glancing at some names in chapter xii. :

'The Sea of Chinneroth,' afterwards called Sea of Galilee.

Beth Jeshimoth, 'house of wastes,' represented by a heap of ruins near the spring.

'Ain Sûeimeh, near the north end of the Dead Sea.

Ashdoth Pisgah, the famous springs at the base of the Moab mountains under Mount Nebo.

Salcah, a city in the extreme limits of Bashan, now represented by the large town of Salkhad, on a volcanic hill which rises 400 feet. It has a strong castle, and commands the desert east. The town is more than two miles in circumference.

Geshurites, probably a region near the Argob north-east.

Maachathites, a small kingdom outside Argob.*

A list of chiefs slain then follows, and their country is indicated from the extreme north under Lebanon to Mount Halek south. The eastern word means 'bare mountain' or 'smooth,' not identified, 'but it goeth up to Seir,' and the chalk cliffs in the northern limit of the Arabah have been suggested. We have already examined the towns belonging to

* 'Bible Cyclopædia.'—Fausset.

many of the sheikhs, and note now Geder, not known, but which was in the extreme south, possibly the 'Gedor' of 1 Chron. iv. 39, or 'Gedor,' a village now called Jedûr, in the mountains near Hebron.

Hormah: Rowlands thought it was S'baita, where there are extensive ruins; a ruined fortress also; it would be near Geder and Arad. The latter is sixteen miles from Hebron, where there is a large ruin now called Tell 'Arad on a large mound. Hormah was also called Zephath.

Libnah: it was in the lowlands of Judah, but has not been identified.

Adullam: a city of Judah in the low country; its place has been found, and will be fully described hereafter.

Tappuah: a word signifying 'apple,' also in the low hill country.

Hepher must lie not far from Dor (Tantura).

Aphek: a Canaanite city, but site unknown.

Lasharon, probably the ruins of Sarôna, six and a half miles west of the south end of the Sea of Galilee, the district generally between Mount Tabor and Sea of Galilee.

Madon: possibly the ruin Madîn, close to Hattin and near Sarôna.

Shimron, Meron: the Jewish traveller, Hap Parchi, fixes it at two hours south of Mount Gilboa.*

Achshaph: thought to be the village 'Kefr Yasîf,' six miles north-east of Acre, and near the modern Haiffa. It is mentioned in the account the Egyptian officer gave of his journey in Canaan, which account has been quoted.

Taanach: again a city somewhere on the sea-coast, for its name means 'sandy soil,' now represented by a small village, Tânnuk, on the edge of the plain of Esdraelon, a little village, with some ruins on a flat mound.

* Fausset.

Megiddo, a large ruin, with fine springs, exists at the foot of Gilboa. It is called Mujedd'a. The position fits in with all Egyptian notices of Megiddo, and all the Biblical notices—a most important position. 'If another campaign should ever occur in Palestine,' then Megiddo is said by military men to be *the* most likely spot for a battle, its position being so important.*

Kedesh : not the Kedesh which was Barak's birthplace.

Jokneam of Carmel, now called Tell Keimûn, on the edge of the plain of Esdraelon. It is a large and prominent hillock, formed by scarping the outlying tongue of a range of hills. The hillock is isolated. Ruins of a later date exist on it.

Dor, on the coast, now Tantûra.

'King of the nations of Gilgal.' The R.V. reads, the King of Goiim in Gilgal ; the word 'Goiim' probably means the nomad people who had been driven away by Joshua. It is thought to be represented by Jiljûlieh, a large mud village in the plain of Sharon. Moslem ruins, and a good well of water.

Tirzah, near Samaria. Conder places it at a village twelve miles north of Shechem ; Robinson at another village six miles east of Samaria.

The enumeration of the cities and land still held by the Canaanites follows, and we see that from Shihor ('the black river'), now called 'Wâdy el 'Arîsh,' Canaan's southern frontier towards Egypt, to Ekron, now 'Akir, in Philistia, six miles west of Gezer, the land was held by the Geshurites and Avites, and from Ekron to Gaza it was occupied by the five Lords of the Philistines. Still taking the seashore, we get 'the land of the Canaanites and Mearah,' which is considered to be a village about six miles north-east of Sidon.

* Conder.

The word 'Mearah' means 'cave,' and east of Sidon are some celebrated caves which are to this day used as hiding-places. Aphek, now 'Afka,' a village on the north-west slope of Lebanon. The name signifies 'strength'; it was famed as the situation of the Appaca of the ancients, where stood a temple to Venus. Thence, to the borders of the Amorites. This is puzzling, but may mean the country eastwards as far as the territory of Og. Then eastwards across Lebanon to Baal-gad. Banias, in the valley of the Lebanon under Hermon, to the 'entering into Hamath'—'the entering' being the great valley between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, that point at which the land of Israel is entered from the east. Hamath, the present Hama, the chief city of Upper Syria. Hama is the key to the whole country. It is now remarkable for its great water-wheels for raising water from the river Orontes; also celebrated for the 'Hamath' or 'Hittite stones.' Then back from Mount Lebanon to 'the burnings of the waters' on the coast. The people who inhabit all this land are to be driven out, and then the land is to be 'divided.' The land and list of towns we will examine hereafter, only now selecting some of the more striking points.

We note that nine and a half tribes had to be provided for. Two and a half had already selected land on the other side of Jordan. Levi was to have no inheritance—'the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance.'

Caleb—the life-long friend of Joshua, the only one who, like Joshua, had been born in Egypt;* who, also like him, had not lost heart when they with the other spies went out from Kadesh to inspect the land, and had seen those cities with their high walls, their giant inhabitants, and had yet begged the people to 'go

* The only one (with Joshua) over sixty years of age who had been born in Egypt. For the punishment of death was not inflicted on those under twenty years at the time of the Exodus.

forward'—he now comes to claim the fulfilment of the promise Moses had made him. The stout-hearted old man, eighty-five years of age, glories in his strength. His trust in God is just as firm as in those days long past, and he asks to have that very bit of country allotted to him where those cities and giants lived. No craven he; if fighting is to be done, he wishes to be at the point of danger, and to undertake the most difficult enterprise. Judah is allotted a large extent of ground, even to Kadesh Barnea on the south, and that frontier which had to protect the new commonwealth against their old oppressors—the Egyptians. All this country we will examine hereafter, merely noting in passing that the extreme south—the 'dry'—was given by Judah to Simeon, that fierce tribe of whom the prophecy ran: 'Simeon . . . weapons of violence are their swords.' His border being the very edge of the desert, he became a pure Bedawin, wandered east, and 'smote the tents' of those peaceful descendants of Ham, 'destroyed them utterly, and dwelt in their stead.' And five hundred of them afterwards crossed the 'Arabah to Mount Seir, smote the 'remnant of the Amalekites, and dwelt there to this day.' All this we can read of in the days of Hezekiah (1 Chron. iv. 39 to end of chapter). How savage and inhospitable are those Arabs of Petra, who boast of their descent from the Beni Israel, every traveller can tell.

Manasseh and Joseph complain that the land allotted to them is not enough, though they had the best of the land, that of the plain of Sharon. Joshua advises them to cease grumbling, and to take more from the 'giants.' They excuse themselves by speaking of the 'chariots of iron' possessed by these people. The Israelites never got over their fear of 'chariots' or 'horses,' and seem to have been like those inhabitants of Mexico whom Cortez so frightened by his horses. Joshua seeks to encourage them, and with clear

foresight sees how these bickerings will prove to be the little 'rift within the lute'; seeks to reunite the tribes by calling them to Shiloh—'peace,' 'rest.' To settle the dispute, he appoints men to 'go through the land not yet allotted,' to divide it into 'seven parts,' which were 'described,' and then 'lots' are cast for these divisions. Dan, finding the portion allotted to them not enough, took more. The great captain then selects Timnath-Serah, in Mount Ephraim, as his own portion, and builds a city the north side of the hill of Gaash. This hill has not been identified. The traditions of the Samaritans and of Jewish pilgrims point to a village now called Kefr Hâris, nine miles south of Shechem, as Timnath. It is a stony ridge with some caves, near which grows a fine carob-tree. The hills rise in terraces, and there are small plantations of olive and fig trees. Major Conder considers this spot to be Timnath. Other authorities think it to be a spot in the mountains north-east of Lydda, where there are numerous ruins, tombs, and ancient cisterns. A very fine evergreen oak grows here. The tombs are very remarkable, cut out of the rock, with recesses to place the dead in; but it is objected that pillars to the tombs are not Jewish. In some of these sepulchral chambers flint knives have been found.

Cities of refuge are then appointed, of which more hereafter. Joshua has other troubles in store. He first has to part with the men of the two and a half tribes, who wished to go to their 'tents,' and the 'land of their possession,' the other side Jordan. What changes they would find in their homes when they did return! And we are not told that any intercourse had been carried on. Wives might be dead, children grown up, for seven years had elapsed; the cord of affection would be much strained. The men part from Joshua in peace, and they go away with very much spoil. A new trouble, however,

at once sprang up; for after crossing the Jordan the departing tribes build an altar. Clearly this altar must have been on the east bank of Jordan, and not while the tribes were on the march.* First, because the 'children of Israel *heard say*' (Josh. xxii. 11) that the altar was built; and had it been built at Kŭrn Sŭrtŭbeh, proposed by Major Conder, which is not eleven miles from Shiloh, they could easily have gone to it; secondly, when Israel in anger gathered themselves to go to war with the two and a half tribes for building the altar, they first sent a deputation of princes and others, and 'come *into* the *land of Gilead*' (ver. 15) before they meet the offending tribes, and Phinehas makes his complaint. Again, it was a '*witness*' altar, probably an exact copy in masonry of the brazen altar at Shiloh; and had it been erected on the *western* side of Jordan, how were the *eastern* tribes to show it to their children? In their reply they urge that they made it as a '*pattern* of the altar of the Lord.' And, again, this altar was 'over against the land of Canaan.' It therefore seems more probable that the altar 'Ed' was somewhere on the eastern range of the mountains of Gilead. Josephus says, when the two and a half tribes '*were passed* over the river, they built the altar.' 'Ed,' therefore, I think, is not identified.†

The active warrior has 'waxed old,' but with unbroken courage he calls the people to the work yet before them. He, who had so often led them to victory, assures them of their final triumph if only 'they turn not to the right hand or the left'—his motto, 'Ever forwards.' He is convinced no man can stand before them, for the Lord God fights for them. His war-note changes, and he becomes the sage; warns them of social dangers, of the 'snares and traps,' and then passing on to an under-note of sadness, he seems to have foreseen the sad

* See Joshua, chapter xxii.

† See Quarterly Statement, January, 1876, pp. 28 to 32.

wreck of all his brightest hopes, and foretells the 'anger' of the Lord.

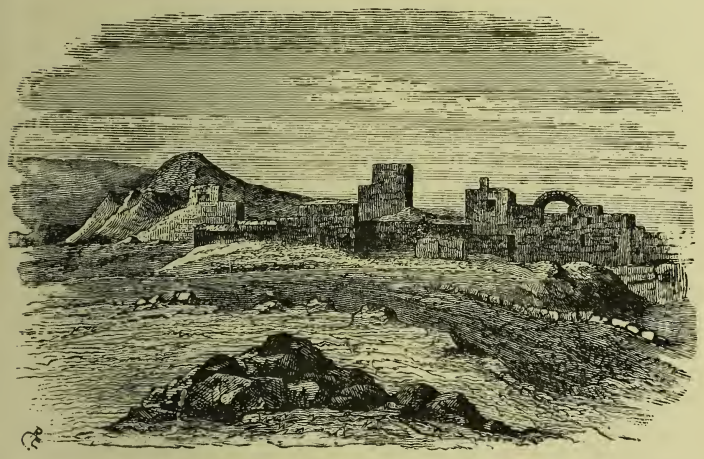
In the heart of the land at Shechem he again recapitulates all that the Lord God had done for them, and they promise to follow his dying words. He writes the words 'in the Book of the Law,' and taking a great stone, set it up under 'an oak,' probably *the* oak of Abraham, 'at' or 'near' the 'sanctuary of the Lord.' He is buried in no sacred place, but in his own inheritance. How great was his influence may be seen in the fact that not only in his life, but in the lives of the 'elders' who had known him, did the fickle nation serve 'the Lord.' The magic example of a grand life led thousands on the straight and narrow path—another example of the terrible responsibility of all prominent men. To the young man entering life it seems as *if* he only had to become great, and then happiness must follow, and when the man does achieve the longed-for position, he feels humbled and abased by the terrible responsibility of the post; but if his heart be right with God, He sends the strength, and no one that trusteth in Him shall ever be ashamed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

FROM the time the Israelites had left Egypt their career had, with very slight exceptions, been one of unbroken successes. Great kingdoms and powerful confederations had gone down before their martial array. The reason is not far to seek: they had been led by men of great mind—of strong, pure faith. We are now to open up a darker picture, across which ever and anon flashes of bright light appear, only to show the pervading gloom. Again the reasons lie close to our hands. The nation had lost faith; it had been corrupted by its success and its contact with other people. It looked, too, to *itself*, and not to Jehovah. Pride in *themselves*, ever *the* great bane of the Jewish race, from then to now, varied with great fits of despondency, is the page we unfold. Joshua's influence still lingers, so 'they ask of the Lord' who is to go up to fight the Canaanites, still unconquered, and the answer is, 'Judah.' This tribe, the 'lion of the Lord,' is the first to show weak faith. Not content with the Divine answer, they ask the help of man. And Judah 'said unto Simeon, his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that *we* may fight,' and promises to do the same for Simeon. They are successful, and take Bezek, a place identified as Bezkah, a ruin six miles south-east of Lydda, the residence at that time of Adoni-bezek, the head of the new confederacy against the invading Israelites. This sheikh had

acted with true Eastern savagery against past opponents, cutting off their thumbs and great-toes, so that they could handle neither sword nor harp, and mutilating their feet, so that they could not march to war. The savagery of the times is shown in the fact that Judah treats him in the same cruel fashion. The sheikh, with true Eastern philosophy, appears to have acknowledged the justice of his treatment. Jerusalem is then said to have been taken; it could not have been the whole city, for Jebus, we know, was held long after. The attack rolls on to



DEBIR.

Hebron; the three giant sons of Anak, who had been seen by the spies sent out by Moses, 'Ahiman,' 'Sheshai,' and 'Talmai' (Num. xiii. 22, 23), were now slain, and Debir, Kirjath Sepher —'the book town,' the university or record town of the sons of Anak—is now to be attempted. We may pause for a moment to note that the name 'book town' argues an advanced state of civilization of these sons of Anak. Probably their 'books' were engraved stones or bricks, similar to Assyrian or Baby-

lonian records. This town is evidently strong, and some delay takes place, for Caleb calls for volunteers to head the assault of the forlorn hope. He offers, in pure Eastern custom again, the bribe of a woman. He will give his daughter Achsah to the successful leader. Does not a love-story lie behind the few words which follow? 'And Othniel took it.' Othniel was not a pure Israelite, but came from the son of Esau. Debir, now called Edh Dhâherîyeh, meaning village on a ridge, is a large village of semi-ruinous appearance, of stone houses built of ancient materials. There is existing an old tower. The position is conspicuous, for the village is high, on a flat ridge, with rocky ground all round it. The water supply is from cisterns. There are rock-cut tombs east of the village, also a sacred place with rock-cut wine-presses, threshing-floor, and two good trees; the houses in front of or over caves, as are all the ruined sites about. Many ancient roads lead from the village to Gaza, Hebron, and Beersheba, all marked by pavements and side-walls. In every respect this ruined site agrees with the position of Debir, and one can understand that it held a position of great military strength. The successful warrior gains his wife, and immediately has to listen to her suggestions. Debir might be a *strong position*, but according to Josh. xv. 19 it was in the south, 'the Negeb,' 'dry' or 'south' land. And the prudent woman knew that *water* was *the* great essential to existence, so she asks her husband and then her father to give her 'springs of water.' Now, six and a half miles north is a valley (Seil el Dibleh) where there are fourteen springs, the finest in the whole 'south' country. There is also a small brook flowing through the land. In the valleys are arable land, olive-trees, and pasture-lands for cattle. The fourteen springs still existing are divided even now into groups, so that they might well be called 'the upper springs,' and 'the nether springs.' Achsah obtains her wish, and Othniel was not the

last man who had to thank his wife for good advice. Debir had been taken by Joshua, but we see from the text that the original inhabitants must have retaken it. Achsah, like all Bedawin women—like Rebecca—had probably been accustomed to water the flocks, and so would know the importance of water. The whole narrative hangs together a thoroughly Eastern story, with vivid touches of truth. The sixteenth verse is very important; we will defer the consideration of it, merely noting the town 'Arad,' which is now represented by a large white mound, called Tell 'Arâd, sixteen miles from Hebron. There are traces of ruins on the mound.

Zephath or Hormah has not been identified, though the name Khŭrbet Hôra has been found east of Beersheba. A low hill; an important site, with wells and underground granaries, a large bell-mouthed cistern, and five small towers. The site occupies a circle of one and a half miles in diameter. S'beita has been suggested as the possible site of Hormath; that place is south of Beersheba.

Then, turning to the west, Judah takes Gaza, the frontier town of Palestine, on the way to Egypt. It was the key to the caravan-road in the days of Abraham; it was the border city of the Canaanites, in fact, before his days. By this road all the Egyptian invaders poured into Palestine, and by it all Assyrian and other invaders marched towards the valley of the Nile. Though conquered now, it must soon after have been lost, as we shall find in later history. It still remains one of the most important towns in Palestine. Ashkelon, on the sea coast, with the 'border,' was then taken. This, again, is one of those cities which, from its position, survives all conquests, and it again was soon retaken by its original inhabitants. The town forms a semicircle—in a hollow, declining towards the sea, surrounded on every side by artificial mounds. It is now called ''Askalân;' it is a ruined place—a few hovels. Marble

carvings and shafts strew the ground for miles; the prophecy: 'Ashkelon shall be a desolation' (Zeph. ii. 4) is fulfilled. Its Biblical history we shall see later; it was of importance in the Crusades, and the last place taken by Baldwin; moreover, it was the seat of the Syrian Venus. These cities were fortified, as the word Gaza implies; but the inhabitants of the valley were *not* driven out, because they had 'chariots of iron.' Here we see again the dread the Israelites ever had of chariots and horsemen. These chariots prove, too, the Egyptian connection and habits the Philistines possessed. That nation was closely allied to the Egyptians, and this may give a clue to the bitter hatred these Philistine people ever had to the Hebrews, and also to the dread with which we know the latter ever met them in battle array.* As I before said, the whole of Jerusalem was not taken, for the people of Jebus 'dwelt' with the children of Benjamin. We noted before that Bethel, so close to Ai, had not been taken when that place was. No reason is given. It, again, is situated on one of those rounded hills which there exist. It is now taken by stratagem, and the traitor is given his life, and goes 'into the land of the Hittites.' Another proof how imperfect had been the conquest of the land: crushing defeats had been given; but the ardour of the Israelites soon cooled. Bethshean and her towns were not taken, doubtless for the same reason; for Bethshean was, and is, a strong position, having abundant water-supply, and having *level* country at its base, where chariots could act. The plain here is about two to three miles broad, and the ruins of the city are on a hill, just where the valley of Jezreel drops to the Jordan Valley.

* The Philistine plain was never long held by the Hebrews. Egyptian records show that the plain was long held by the Pharaohs. There is a representation of the siege of Ascalon by Rameses II. In Hezekiah's reign we learn from the cuneiform records that each of the Philistine towns had its own king, and that they allied themselves with Sennacherib against Jerusalem (Conder, 'Palestine,' pp. 50, 51).

The mountains of Gilboa lie to the south; the ruins are very large and important, and the hill is more than 300 feet above the Jordan Valley. The ancient city must have been from two to three miles in circumference, and well watered; no less than four brooks pass through the site—one has a waterfall of twenty-five feet.

Taanach and her towns were also unconquered. Its position was on a hill on the southern edge of the plain of Esdraelon. It is now called T'annuk. The old ruins are extensive on the top of the hill, the modern village being at the base. Many of the springs of the Kishon take their rise hereabouts, for Taanach means sandy soil, out of which the springs issue. Dor and her towns retained their independence—a sea-coast town, and that position could be held by people who possessed ships, which the Israelites had not. The narrative then goes back to 'Ibleam,' which is believed to be represented by Yebla, a site north-west of Bethshean. The hills here are numerous and steep. Megiddo, a most important and frequently mentioned place, will require fuller mention later on. It was known to the Egyptians, for the name occurs in the list of Thothmes. Many suggestions have been made as to its position, but it appears to be best represented by Mujedd'a, in the plain of Beisân (Bethshean), at the foot of Gilboa. The site is that of a large and ancient town. Fine springs are near. So these unconquered cities, all except Dor, were close together, and near Bethshean. The flat country, over which horses and chariots could range, was the reason of their strength, for the Israelites were more frightened by horses than by men. The tribe of Ephraim also failed to drive out the Canaanites from Gezer. This was a long-lost site, and yet its after-history was of the greatest importance. M. Clermont Ganneau found the name Tell Jezar still clinging to the ruins of a city, an important strategical point on the plain towards Egypt. The ruins are extensive, and occupy an extensive plateau at the summit of the Tell, which is 250 feet

above the level of the surrounding valleys. There is a narrow rocky valley on the east, while on the north and west the ground is open and flat. There is a fine and extensive view from the hill, as it is the extreme outpost of the low hills, where they abut on the plain. Here again we see from the position of Gezer that chariots would be able to act, and so keep the Israelites at bay. Zebulun fails also. Kitron is said by the Talmud to be the town now called Seffûrieh in Galilee, while Nahalol is thought to be the present 'Ain Mâhil, north-east of Nazareth. These sites are near each other. The first is still an important place; its position a very strong one. Asher fails to take Acco, the modern Acre—the so-called key of Palestine. Here again shipping would enable the inhabitants to resist the invaders, and for the same reason the strong city of Zidon resists the attack. Zidon, called by Joshua 'Great Zidon,' was the mother city of Tyre, and Zidon was the firstborn of Canaan (Gen. x. 15). It is mentioned by Homer, and famed for its sumptuous robes and silver work. It was founded by those famous mariners of old, the Phœnicians, who lived on or close to the sea, only caring for harbours in which they could barter their commerce. The modern town of Saida is well built, and surrounded by magnificent gardens. Ahlab is thought to be El Jish, the Gischala of Josephus, the frontier town of Asher, next to Tyre. Its position a lofty hill, with a deep ravine, down which flows a stream. Many ruins are scattered about, numerous sepulchral caves, and the remains of a khan built of basaltic stones lie across the ravine.

Achzib, the modern Ez Zîb, eight and a half miles north of Acre. After the return from the captivity of Babylon, this was considered the northern boundary of the Holy Land. Helbath, not identified, but thought to be near Zidon. Aphik and Rehob, not yet identified. Beth-shemesh ('house of the sun'), of Naphtali, has not been identified. There were many towns of that name, which shows how sun-worship had obtained in Palestine.

Beth-anath (of Naphtali), now 'Ainîtha; it was one of the 'fenced cities,' and is six miles west of Kedesh. The Amorites are too strong for the children of Dan, and drive them into the hill country, not allowing them to dwell in the valley. The Amorites dwelt in Mount Heres, Aijalon and Shaalbim. Five miles north of the valley of Ajalon is a village. Five miles east of this is a very prominent and commanding hill-top, which may be the 'Heres.' Shaalbim is probably the present Selbît, south-east of Lydda, and near Ajalon, which is now called Yalo, a little to the north of the Jaffa road, and about thirteen miles from Jerusalem. The house of Joseph prevailed, and these Amorites became tributary; though the border of the Amorites was at 'the ascent of Akrabbim,' 'the Scorpion Pass.' This is thought to be the region south of the Dead Sea and Zin. The pass now called El Sufah is considered to represent it, which pass leads to the desert and Kadesh Barnea.

From Gilgal, the old camp, 'the angel of the Lord' calls the people to a meeting, which place is afterwards called Bochim ('weepers'), probably it was between Bethel and Shiloh. The hearts of the people are touched, and a momentary reformation sets in. So often we are told the children of Israel 'wept.' It seems strange to Western manhood; but he who has seen an Eastern multitude will the better understand what a true touch of Eastern life is here conveyed. Western masses are excitable enough; they are cold and calm to that excitement Easterns are so prone to. At one moment they show the ferocity of the tiger, followed by the antics of an ape, and succeeded by womanly despair and weeping. Let those who have seen the great religious or political gatherings in the East say if this picture is overdrawn; on the contrary, this Biblical statement is but another proof of the truth of this story.

Joshua dies, and is buried in Timnath Heres ('portion of the sun'), formerly called Timnath Serah ('portion of abun-

dance '). Kefr Hâris, a small village on high ground, nine miles south of Shechem, is thought to be the place. Three sacred places, or tombs, exist there. It was Joshua's own city, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. This hill has not been identified.

Evil and sin set in with a flood; God is forsaken. The foul idols of the people of the land are followed. The once conquering nation is now the prey to every spoiler. They gather the bitter fruits of their sin to the full; 'sore distressed' are they, but they 'cease not from their stubborn way.' A list is given of those they could not drive out. They accept their wretched position, take wives from the peoples, and give their own daughters to the sons of the land. Darker days are yet in store. They are again to taste a second Egyptian bondage, for the Lord gives them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim, 'the Ethiopian of double wickedness,' king of those tribes between the country of the Euphrates and the Kabour, and including Syria to Haran; not an Assyrian, for that empire was not yet founded, but probably one of those kings of whom those recent cuneiform inscriptions found in *Egypt*, and some of which are in the British Museum, tell us of, which show an unsuspected intercourse and intermarrying between Egyptians and the races from beyond the Euphrates, hinted at in the Bible more than once—shown here in this name of the king, an 'Ethiopian,' these cuneiform inscriptions prove up to the hilt the truth of this narrative. As in the days of old, when Israel 'cried unto the Lord' because of the bitter bondage of the Egyptians, and He sent Moses, so now they cry unto the Lord, and He sends them a saviour, even Othniel*—he who had taken the stronghold of Debir; and the land had rest forty years, and from that time they are released from their *second* Egyptian bondage.

Othniel dies. Again the children of Israel sin. An old foe

* Othniel was really the last of the generation of conquerors.

reappears, and, capturing Jericho, cuts the kingdom in half. Ehud comes forward—a left-handed man. He takes a present—a truly Eastern mode of treachery. From Gilgal he passes by the quarries, or 'graven images,' which separated Israel from the new Moabite territory. The dark deed done, Ehud escapes to Seirah, a place not identified. A great gathering follows. The Jordan fords are taken, and those Moabites who were over the border are slain, and the city of palm-trees and valley recovered. Shamgar, 'the name of a stranger,' saves Israel from a Philistine invasion from the west. Their foray was defeated, and six hundred of their warriors slain by an ox-goad, which would be about eight feet long, with an iron spade at one end and an iron spike at the other—a weapon requiring the strength of a giant. Evil reigning in the land, the people are oppressed by Jabin, who, during these depressed times of Israel, had been gathering strength; he came from Hazor, most probably now represented by Hadîreh, the exact Arabic equivalent, a ruin near Kades, in Upper Galilee; 'a dark, bare, rocky hillock, near the flat, fertile plateau of Kadesh Naphtali, above the steep slopes which run eastward to Jordan.' Hazor has the most rugged ascent in Palestine—a veritable stronghold for a Canaanite king. Jabin's name means 'prudent'—his choice of headquarters justifies his title. Sisera, his commander-in-chief, resides at Harosheth, of the Gentiles, or nations. This latter stronghold is believed to be the present El Hârithîyeh, which is the exact signification of the Hebrew word. At the entrance of Esdraelon, where it joins the Acre plain, is a large mound, near the base of Carmel, the Kishon flowing by. The word Harosheth means forests, and there still are the densely-wooded slopes. This position, so strong, would command both plains, on which the nine hundred chariots of iron could act. At Hazor, the headquarters of the king, Jabin, chariots would be useless. The prophetess

Deborah dwelt in the hill country, between Ramah (now Er Ram), five miles north of Jerusalem, and Bethel (Beitin), nine and a half miles north of Jerusalem—her abode under a palm-tree.* She sends for Barak ('lightning') from the far north, Kadesh Naphtali, close to the waters of Merom, and orders him to go to Mount Tabor. He declines, unless accompanied by the prophetess,† who goes back to Kadesh, and there in the highlands 10,000 men are gathered. Doubtless Barak had distinguished himself as a patriotic leader, and therefore was selected by Deborah.

The direct narrative here breaks off to relate how Heber, the Kenite, who had separated from his clan, lived in Zaanannim—'the plain of the oak,' or terebinth, probably the plateau west of the Sea of Galilee, and near the present ruins of Bessum; marshy ground, and suited for a Bedawîn tribe.

The narrative again goes on to tell how, from Harosheth, Sisera and all his host are 'drawn' by God to leave his strong position and march, with the river Kishon in his rear, to attack Barak, who was posted on Tabor. During a terrible storm—so great that it is said 'the stars in their courses fought against Sisera'—Barak, 'the lightning' leader, swoops down on the chariot host, 'and the Lord discomfited Sisera. Like as at Crecy, the huge array, disorganized by the storm, were driven back to the swamps of the Kishon. The quicksands and marshes of that river swept them away, or engulfed them, and the host is crushed. Those who have witnessed the effects of a hailstorm driving over the hills of Tabor and Carmel, and seen how the Kishon, which in ordinary times is but a small brook, becomes in half an hour a roaring tropical river, and sweeping

* It is curious to note that on the coins of the Roman Empire Judæa is represented as a woman seated under a palm-tree captive and weeping.

† The German prophetess Velleda roused her country against the invaders from Rome. The peasant girl of France did the same against the English.

on with resistless force, forming marshes and quicksands into which one's horses sink knee-deep, can somewhat realize the awful confusion when the clumsy chariots and their frightened steeds plunged into the swamps. Sisera, however, leaves his chariot, and on foot seeks to escape in an opposite direction to that which his defeated army had taken. From near Endor, which, lying south-west of Tabor (was the probable site of the battle), it would be only a few miles to the plain of Zaanannim, where stood the tents he hoped would shelter him. Heber was away, probably with Barak; but Jael recognises the person of the commander-in-chief of Jabin's host. She offers him shelter, and covers him with a rug. He asks for water. She gives him none. Why? Was it because had she done so his life would have been sacred? So it appears she tries to quibble with her conscience, and gives him some milk from a bottle which she opens. What was this milk? The Bible calls it 'butter in a lordly dish' (Judges v. 25). It was '*Lubban*' (sour butter-milk), which all Bedawîn even to-day drink when worn out with fatigue and desiring sleep, for it readily produces drowsiness. A 'deep sleep' was on him immediately, and, with a hammer and tent-peg, she smote the tent-peg into his temples, and he died. Barak had been in hot pursuit. He had not lost traces of the fugitive leader, and now Jael shows him dead.

A terrible story! Let us look at some of the surroundings. Heber was a Kenite, coming from Hobab,* who had long before separated himself from his tribe to be 'eyes' to the children of Israel at the request of Moses; Hobab knew all the trackways and springs in that desert through which the children of Israel had to go. His descendants had followed the fortunes of Israel, had settled in the land of promise under those oaks of Zaanannim, and their hearts and sympathy would

* Numbers x. 29. See also Judges i. 16.

be with the people of their adoption. And as the sufferings of Israel had roused the prophetic passion of Deborah, and inspired her to summon Barak, might not the same sympathy madden the heart of this fierce Bedawîn woman, Jael ('the chamois'), and every consideration be lost but the desire to rival the grand deeds of Deborah, that so, through despised womankind, Israel might be saved?—quieting her conscience, if it spoke, by the thought: 'I did not give him *water!*'—I heaped contempt on the hated oppressor, for he was slain by the hands of a woman! 'And the land had rest forty years.'

An old foe now prevails against Israel. Two hundred years before this Israel had avenged itself on Midian, and now this ancient foe reappears. Bedawîn, in short, gathered from Midian, that land the other side of the Gulf of Akabah, almost unexplored till of late years by Sir Richard Burton.* The Amalekites, also from Sinai Peninsula, and 'the children of the East,' or the Beni Kedem, as the original has it, begin a series of terrible raids. They come up at harvest-time, and harry the whole plain country, sweeping even to Gaza. They would have crossed by the Jordan fords, near Bethshean; their camels, their flocks, are like locusts, and eat up the land. The Israelites hide themselves in caves and strongholds in the hills. This had gone on for seven seasons; when Gideon is called, he is at Ophrah. Gideon is beating out the wheat *in the wine-press*, secretly, not daring to do it in the open threshing-floor. He asks for signs that the call is from Jehovah; they are given, and immediately he commences a reformation by building an altar to the Lord. He destroys the altars of Baal and the Asherah, that foul worship, and now again comes the invader. Gideon sends messengers to the four tribes; they gather to him at the 'well of Harod,'

* Burton's 'Land of Midian.'

probably that spring now known as 'Ain Jalûd, which issues from the base of Mount Gilboa, and forms a pool of about fifty yards long, artificially dammed at the further end; it is six to eight feet deep. Major Conder suggests it may be a pool, further east, near Bethshean, now called ''Ain el Jemm'ain,' 'the spring of the two troops.' Here 22,000 of the Israelites gather—that is, on the high ground, flanking the plain, up which the invader is pouring. So stereotyped is the East, that the writer has often, in days gone by, seen the Bedawîn come to feed their flocks on the rich plain, and it is only quite of late years that they have been prevented. He has many sketches of the Bedawîn encampments, with their camels and flocks 'eating up' the plain. The Midianites and their allies number 135,000. Gideon is told to send away of his followers all those who are 'fearful and trembling.' This sifting done, 10,000 remain. Still this is too many, 'lest Israel vaunt itself.' A test is applied. He that 'lappeth as a dog' when he drinks at the springs is to stay. Why this? Surely because these men proved that in a hot and thirsty land they could control their appetites, and were prudent, not drinking on their knees to the full. There are only three hundred left. Gideon and his servant go to spy out the enemy. They overhear a dream retold. Hitherto the Midianites in past years had had their own way; now they have heard of the God-sent leader, and their hearts melt and are like water. Probably, too, they know nothing of the reduction of Gideon's forces. Gideon adopts a most clever stratagem; these three hundred men have each a trumpet, and empty pitchers, with torches in each. In the middle watch, when the new watch had just been set—that hour in the early dawn when all men camping out of doors feel so drowsy—Gideon places his men on the flanks and in the rear. A signal given: the three hundred trumpets blare out

their note of attack; the three hundred torches flash out on the chilly night. A panic, such as ever seems to have befallen Eastern hosts when attacked in the morning hours, follows. Then this mixed multitude—only united together for plunder—of different race, Midianites, Amalekites, and 'Beni Kedem,' consider that they are attacked by a huge army, and knowing nothing of one another, make the fatal mistake of attacking *each* other. They fly by Beth-shittah ('the house of the acacia'), probably the present Shutta, a village in the marshy ground, near Bethshean. Here exist many grass-covered mounds. On they fly towards the Jordan, to Zererah, which is thought to be Tell Sarêm, three miles south of Bethshean, on to Abelmeholah ('the meadow of the dance'), a place afterwards mentioned as being near Bethshean, then on to Tabbath, which is not identified. Pouring out from the hill fastnesses come the men of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh, and join the hot pursuit.* Gideon had early sent to take possession of the fords as far as Bethbarah. In summer time, fords are numerous at this part of the Jordan, so we cannot fix which one is meant. Probably the remains of the host crossed several. There is one ford, however, north of Bethshean, now called Makhadet 'Abârah, 'the ford of the crossing'; it is the most important of all the fords. Two of the leaders, Oreb ('raven'), Zeeb ('wolf')—leaders or 'princes'—were taken and slain, one at the *rock* of Oreb or 'raven's cliff.' There is a sharp conical peak, called 'Osh el Ghŭrâb ('raven's nest'), which may represent it, and there is also a mound, Tuweil edh Dhîâb. Two miles north is another peak or tall rock, which may have been the scene of the death of Zeeb. Gideon passes *over* Jordan in pursuit, 'faint yet pursuing,' and asks bread of the people of

* 'There was but *one* sword, and that in the hands of Gideon, but it was the *sword of the* Lord.'

Succoth. They, doubting if the overthrow were yet complete, decline to give the desired food. Now, Succoth could not have been, as some think, Sakût, for that place is on the western bank of Jordan, and the valley thereabouts is barren, with no vestiges of towns; and Gideon had 'passed over' Jordan. The routed host were taking the shortest course to the great eastern plains from which, probably, they had come. Most authorities and the American expedition consider Succoth to be represented by Dar'ala, a high mound (sixty feet), with a smaller one near; the larger mound is covered with broken pottery; this mound is artificial. It is, in short, a mass of débris. The Arabs say a large city once existed here, so the position of the city was in the great plain of the Jabbok. It was the great caravan or army route. Gideon, justly enraged by the answer given by the people of Succoth, threatens them with punishment after his victory—of which he has no doubt. Penuel is applied to in like manner, and they cowardly answer as did the men of Succoth. Penuel was a frontier fortress built by the 'way of them that dwell in tents'; that is, on the level ground where water and grass could be found. Straight onwards would lie the Jordan fords; there is a high hill near, now called Jebel Osh'a, and here, or near here, would probably be the position of the 'tower.'

At Karkor the kings Zebah and Zalmunna rallied the remains of their host. The remnant, 15,000 men, now considered themselves safe. Karkor would be in the plain, for it means 'level ground'; but Gideon, going on this caravan route east of Nobah and Jogbehah, smote the host again. Kunâwat, in the Lejjah, probably represents Nobah, while Jogbehah is satisfactorily identified with the large ruin of Jubeihat, on the top of the hills of Gilead, north of Rabbath Ammon; it would all be a direct line from Gilboa. Gideon punishes Succoth,

and also Penuel, destroying the tower and slaying the men; he then executes with his own hand Zebah and Zalmunna, because they in days before had slain his own brothers. Rich spoil is now collected of gold, and spoil so enormous that it became a snare to Gideon. The investigations of the gold-mines of Midian, made by the late Sir Richard Burton, easily explains how these Bedawîn became possessed with such store of golden earrings and chains. The land again has rest forty years. Gideon dies at a good old age, and is buried in his old home, where he first saw the angel and accepted his mission.

The sad history of Abimelech follows. Israel now turned to worship Baalim at Shechem, which had become the head-quarters of the false god. There seems to have been a house, Baal-berith (Judges ix. 4)—'Covenant Baal'—so ungrateful are the Israelites to the Lord God. Gideon himself so hated Baal that his name was ever known as Jerubbaal ('let Baal strive'). Now the people follow Abimelech, who slaughters all Gideon's sons but one. The people assemble at Millo, a 'tower,' doubtless the citadel of Shechem. The first parable is shouted by Jotham ('Jehovah is perfect'). In danger he escapes, and goes to Beer, probably Beeroth, now Bîreh, a village one day's march from Jerusalem, on the north road. Sin soon brought its punishment. A festival is held in the house of the god. Wine brings on a revolt against Abimelech, who for a time carries all before him and slays the revolters. He had held an ambush, and comes from the Oak of Meonenim, which was probably near Shechem, but the place is not identified. Abimelech was dwelling at Arumah, now called El 'Orma, a ruined site on a mound or Tell, half-way between Shechem and Shiloh. The house of 'Covenant Baal' is destroyed. Mount Zalmon, from which Abimelech cuts boughs to set fire to the tower, must have been near Shechem, probably that part of

Mount Gerizim now called Jebel Sulman (Mount Salmon). East of this is a small plain called El Mukhnah ('the camp'). An attack is now made on Thebez, where there is a strong tower. Thebez is the present Tâbâs, north-east of Shechem, and is still an important town. It is situated on the slopes and summit of a hill, whose sides are pierced with numerous cisterns, some in use. Hundreds of people even now live underground, in caves cut in the rock. Many ancient tombs are cut in the hills close by. Fine olive groves exist here, and the name is little changed. Abimelech comes to his death by the hand of a woman, who from the tower cast an upper mill-stone on his head; and to avoid the disgrace of perishing by the hand of a woman, he asks his armour-bearer to thrust him through, and he dies hated by all.

To save Israel, Tola arises; he dwells in the hill country of Ephraim, at Shamir ('a sharp point'), some hill fortress. It may be Khŭbet Sammer,* a ruin ten miles from Shechem, overlooking the Jordan Valley. Others think it was near Hebron. It has not been satisfactorily identified. Then arises Jair ('enlightener'), who is a chief. He has thirty sons and thirty cities. Havvoth Jair is an old name revived. It was one of the sixty fenced cities of Og in Bashan.

The sad story of Israel's apostasy from Jehovah still goes on from bad to worse. Not only Baal, but all the false gods of the nations around them are served by them. They for eighteen years are oppressed from the east by Ammon, from the west by the Philistines. Again they repent, and put away the false gods, and again God has mercy on them. What a story of man's weakness and God's mercy! Ammon is gathered together in Gilead; Israel at Mizpah. Ramoth Gilead, a city east of Jordan, is now called Es Salt. It is in a direct line from Shiloh, a very strong position, as it is defended on three

* Van de Velde.

sides by high hills. Halfway up the ravine is a ruined citadel. This place was the key of Gilead, and at the head of the only easy road from the Jordan. The Israelites seek a leader, and choose Jephthah, who was called from the land of Tob ('good'). The name exists under its Arabic form in Taiyibeh ('good'). It is about thirteen miles south-east of the Sea of Galilee, where is a 'Tell' and a ruined site. Jephthah accepts the leadership, and sends messengers to the King of Ammon; twice he does this. Remonstrating with the king, he points out that for about 300 years the Israelites had held undisputed possession of the land, and he asks why Chemosh should have what Jehovah had given the Israelites. Here we see the religious bent of Jephthah's mind. The king will not listen. The Israelitish leader then gathers his forces and passes over. He smote the enemy from Aroer, now called 'Ar'aîr, a desolate heap, where there are wells and cisterns, to Minnith, now thought to be Mineh, where there are traces of terraces and walls. The depression is now called 'Kurm Dhibân'* ('the vineyards of Dibon'). It is singular the name should be preserved in this depression, where no grapes now grow. It lies, too, in the very route a defeated army would naturally take; moreover, it is a great sheep-grazing country. Twenty cities were captured by Jephthah; now shapeless knolls are only to be seen. The pursuit goes on to Abel Cheramim ('plain of the vineyards'), and the children of Ammon were subdued.

The story of Jephthah's vow is celebrated by artist and poet, and most writers say: 'There is no sadder story in the Bible'; but have not some considerations been overlooked?

1. Jephthah was a believer in Jehovah.† He says to the elders when they come to request him to be leader: '*The Lord*

* 'Land of Moab,' Tristram, p. 139. See also 'The Land of Gilead,' Oliphant, p. 153.

† See Dr. Edersheim, 'Israel under Joshua and Judges,' pp. 156-163.

deliver them before me.' Again: 'The Lord shall be witness between us,' in his message to the King of Ammon; 'And the Lord the God of Israel delivered Sihon into the hand of Israel;' 'The Lord *our* God;' 'The Lord the judge be judge this day.' He contrasts Jehovah with Chemosh. '*Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah.*' From his message he was evidently well acquainted with the Mosaic books. He would know that a human sacrifice was an abomination to Jehovah (Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2-5). Was it therefore likely he would propose a HUMAN sacrifice?

2. He would know by the Mosaic law that burnt sacrifices were to be *males:* 'a male without blemish' (Lev. i. 3). When the Lord says: 'All the first-born are Mine,' 'Mine they shall be' (Num. iii. 12, 13), there is no suggestion ever made that they were offered as burnt sacrifices; they were dedicated to God. Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac was not a *literal* burnt offering; he was redeemed. Jephthah says: 'Whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house.' He is met by his only child—a maiden! She, the only chance of his name and blood to be perpetuated. This is the agony to him: that his name and race must die with himself. As for the daughter, she asks to bewail her virginity. Why? Because now she never could be the mother of the hoped-for Messiah—that hope which from the earliest time had ever been the most cherished dream of every Hebrew woman; to fulfil the promise 'that the seed of the woman should "bruise the serpent's head"' (Gen. iii. 15). The daughter asks for two months to bewail her virginity; she is celebrated four times every year by the maidens. Would they have *praised* a human sacrifice? Remember her father was no worshipper of Molech. He offers her as a *spiritual offering*—a life-long virginity. Like those Gibeonites in the days of Joshua, whose lives were spared, she would be a servant in the sanctuary all the days of her life.

And lastly, where was the altar to JEHOVAH on which she could be sacrificed? Altars in plenty to Chemosh; but neither Jephthah nor she worshipped that false god!

Jephthah dies. He had known no father's home; he had been 'driven out' (Judges xi. 2), and no child, no grandchildren, are there to cheer him in his old age, or close his dying eyes. Would his name have been included by Paul in Hebrews xi. 32, as one of those of whom it is said, by 'faith' they did their great works, and 'wrought righteousness,' if he had slain his daughter? Impossible!

To show how low Israel had fallen, we read that even after Jephthah's great victory the Ephraimites were jealous of him —even fought with him; but the brave warriors of his own tribe—that of Gilead—took the fords of Jordan, and as the fugitives of Ephraim came over, made them pronounce a word. The accent betrayed the Ephraimites, and of them Gilead slew 'forty and two thousand.'

Doing evil again, Israel is now delivered to her western enemies, the Philistines, whom she served forty years. In Zorah lives a man of Dan who has a pious wife; she has no children. A son is promised to her; he is to be a 'Nazarite.' We see in Numbers vi. what that means. He is to separate himself to the Lord; to drink no wine or strong drink; he is to let the locks of his hair grow long; he is to be 'holy unto the Lord.' He may be released from his vow; but it is only after a sacrifice or 'oblation' to the Lord. Manoah vows that the promised child shall be a Nazarite for *life* 'to the day of his death,' at the bidding of the angel. The mother herself is to drink no wine, nor eat any unclean thing. The 'angel does wondrously.' The man Manoah is frightened, and says, 'We shall surely die, because we have seen God!' The woman has a deeper faith and a keener wit, and replies that if the Lord had intended to slay them He would not have received a burnt

offering at their hands! The promised child is born at Zorah, now called Sur'ah, a little village on the top of a steep bare hill which looks down on the corn valley of Sorek. Zorah was famed in old time for its vines, and Sorek also abounded in vines; hence it was a most terrible ordeal for Samson to forego wine. The place Zorah was a border fortress, and it has been suggested that perhaps Manoah commanded that military post. A rude shrine still exists; a tradition says it is the tomb of Samson. The boy grows; 'the Lord blessed him,' and the Spirit of the Lord moved him in Mahanehdan, *i.e.*, 'The camp of Dan;' apparently the plain between Zorah and Eshtaol, now called Wâdy el Mutlŭk ('the valley of the free range'). Eshtaol is probably the present Eshû'a, a small village at the foot of the hills in the low country of Judah, close to Zorah.

Samson goes to Timnah, the ancient Timnath, where Judah had kept his flocks. It is said he 'went down.' The present ruined site, Tibnah, on the south side of the valley of Sorek, represents the old town. Samson going from Zorah would have to descend 700 feet, and then reascend 350 feet. Vineyards and olives still line the sides of the hill, and corn grows in the valley. He falls in love with a woman there, and in spite of all his father and mother can say, insists that they get the woman to become his wife. Here is a true touch of Eastern life. The preliminary negotiations as to marriage in the East are always arranged by the parents. It is a matter of 'barter,' or arrangements for dowry, etc. On his way down, Samson slays a lion who comes out of the vineyards. Returning some time after, in the dried skeleton, he finds a swarm of bees and their honey. He eats and gives to his parents. He marries the woman, and holds high festival—as is usual even now—for seven days. Amongst the other amusements, Samson propounds a riddle; such would be one of the amusements at a

marriage-feast now. Failing to discover the riddle, the guests complain to the bride that she has asked them to the feast only to 'impoverish us.' Through wifely tears Samson loses his secret. He then has to provide the garments, and in revenge he goes to Ashkelon—one of the towns belonging to the Philistines—slays thirty men, and gives their garments to those who had declared the riddle. Ashkelon, one of the five Philistine royal cities, is on the coast of the Mediterranean. The old city is buried in sand-dunes. There is, however, still a city of 'Askalân. It is twenty-four miles from the ruins of Timnath, from which Samson started. The name will come up again, and we will then give a fuller account of the place. In anger Samson leaves his wife, and her father, with Oriental contempt of the marriage, gives the wife to Samson's companion—a picture of low morality, truly, these Philistines exhibit. Samson's anger passes away, and he thinks better of it, and returns to his wife, then to discover what has happened. To appease his anger, her father proposes to give Samson her younger sister, who is said to be fairer and a more handsome woman. The bribe is rejected. Samson captures three hundred 'foxes,' probably jackals. Tying them together, he puts a firebrand between the tails, and turns them loose in the standing corn, destroying not only all the corn, but the oliveyards. In great anger the Philistines inquire who has done this. Not able to revenge themselves on Samson, they cowardly burn the woman and her father 'with fire.' Samson threatens vengeance. He smites them with a 'great slaughter,' and then retires to 'the cleft of rock Etam.' 'The rock' is well represented by 'Atâb ('eagle's nest'). It is pre-eminently a rock—a knoll of hard limestone, without a handful of arable soil, standing above deep ravines by three small springs. It has long been a hiding-place, and the word rendered 'top of the rock Etam' is really 'clift' or 'chasm'; and such a chasm exists here—a long, narrow

cavern, such as Samson might well have 'gone down' into, and which bears the suggestive name Hasûta, meaning 'refuge' in Hebrew. This remarkable 'cave of refuge' is two hundred and fifty feet long, eighteen feet wide, and five to eight feet high. Its south-west end is under the centre of the modern village. At its north east extremity there is a rock shaft ten feet deep. Samson could hide here in safety, unless anyone found the entrance of the tunnel. It is a conspicuous rock, and not far from Zorah. Three thousand of the men of Judah, frightened by the Philistines, cowardly ask Samson that he will allow them to bind him and deliver him to the enemy. He agrees on the sole condition that they themselves will not kill him when so bound. They promise, bind him, bring him up from the rock, and are about to deliver him to the Philistines, who shout for joy as they see their terrible enemy at last in their power, as they think. Then the Spirit of the Lord comes mightily upon him, and the cords drop off him. He has no weapon, but finds the jawbone of an ass, and with that rude sword slays a thousand men.

Exhausted by his efforts and sore athirst, he calls on *the name of the Lord* in Ramath Lehi. Lehi means 'jawbone.' Ramath Lehi was the eminence—'the hill of the jaw.' From some cleft in the rock ('for God clave the hollow place that is in Lehi') water miraculously 'came out'; as Jehovah caused water to flow at Horeb, at Kadesh, so now water flows to refresh the wearied warrior. No wonder that spring was ever afterwards called Enhakkore ('the spring of him that had called'). How baseless the idea that the water flowed from the ass's jawbone! It only needs careful reading to dispel it.

'Near Zoreah there is a low hill, on the slopes of which are some springs called 'Ayûn Abu Mehârib ("the fountains of the place of battles"). Near is a ruin called Ism Allah ("the name of God"). These springs are sometimes called 'Ayûn

Kara, in which name we should recognise easily the Enhakkore, or "Fountain of the Crier."'*

Samson goes down to Gaza, now called Guzzeh, and before described—one of the five Philistine cities, from its strength the key of the caravan route to Egypt. This Nazarite, born in the country, falls at the temptation of the 'sin of cities.' His coming was noted, the people of the place propose to take him, but in the still hour of midnight Samson arose, and, finding the gate of the city shut, plucked up the posts of the gate, and bar and all, and carried them 'to the top mountain that is before Hebron,' or, more properly translated, 'the top of a hill which faces towards Hebon.' He had again escaped, but his fall was near, in the valley of Sorek, now Wâdy Sŭrâr ('the valley of the fertile spot'), which has its source near Beeroth, and runs forty-four miles, and then enters the sea eight and a half miles south of Jaffa. It separates the rugged mountains from the low rolling hills: beyond is the plain of Philistia, or Sharon. Here Samson saw a woman, and loved her. Her name, Delilah, 'the weak' or 'longing one,' shows what she was, and her home being in Sorek, where the choicest red grapes grew, suggests at once a Capua.

Balaam had suggested those very same means to ruin the Israelites, and now the Philistine lords promise her about £700 sterling if she will but 'entice him.' Three times does Samson trick her. At last by her importunities 'his soul was vexed unto death,' and 'he told her all his heart.' The temptress sees he has told her all. In sinful dalliance he sleeps. A man shaves off his locks. The Philistines lay hold on him, and 'put out his eyes.' Egyptian and also Assyrian sculptors show us plainly how this was done. He is bound with fetters of brass, and set to 'grind in the prison-house'—a truly Oriental vengeance, heaping indignity on the captive by giving

* See 'Tent Work in Palestine,' Conder, pp. 273-277.

him *woman's* work to do! He had fallen by a woman, and has to do her work! His hair began to grow again! In the house of Dagon, their god, the Philistines hold high revels. That god, half man, half fish, is found sculptured on the walls of Khorsabad. They joined the human form to the animal, to signify nature's vivifying power through water. When their hearts are merry—*i.e.*, drunken with wine—they send for blind Samson to make 'sport,' and he does so. They are entirely ignorant that a heart-felt repentance has been going on in him. His feats of strength amuse them. When resting, he begs the lad who leads him to let him feel the pillars of the house that he may rest, and with a fervent prayer to the Lord, the blind giant bowed himself with all his might. With a terrible crash the temple falls to the ground, crushing in its fall the Philistine lords and all the people who were therein assembled. His awful revenge hushes the Philistine nation. They allow his brethren to come and search out the battered body, which is laid in the grave of Manoah his father.

'In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.' What a significant statement! Brief, but full of sad meaning. In the first place we see Micah robbing his own mother. Remorse takes possession of him, and he returns the money. She employs a metallist to make of a portion a molten image. Then we read of a wandering Levite, who for pay, food, and apparel becomes a 'priest' to Micah, who, now that he has a 'priest' in his house, imagines 'the Lord' will do him good! Superstition and priestcraft ever went hand in hand.

The Danites of the plain of Sharon, from Zorah and Eshtaol, finding themselves unable to drive out the Philistines, cast about for more land. They sent five men from Zorah as spies to search the land. In their wandering they go to the house of Micah; they know the Levite; they recognise his voice;

they ask counsel of him. In their search they come to Laish, where they find the people dwelling in fancied security, 'quiet and secure,' doing as they liked, no one to check them, and far from Zidon. Secretly the spies go back to Zorah. Six hundred men, armed for war, follow them. They halt at Kirjath-Jearim, in Judah, a place on the border-line of Judah and Benjamin, believed to be Erma, about twelve miles from Jerusalem, then on to Ephraim and Micah's house. By force they take the images and the priest; they steal Micah's goods, who gathers his men and overtakes the raiding party. They insolently warn him to hold his tongue, as there are angry men amongst them. Micah, seeing they are too strong for him, returns to his house. His history begins by robbing his mother, and now all is stolen from him, though he had fancied because he had a 'priest' the Lord would do him 'good'!

Laish is conquered, and is called 'Dan,' a city under Mount Hermon, near the plain Beth-rehob, a place first mentioned in Num. xiii. 21 as the furthest place visited by the spies sent out by Moses: 'Rehob, as men come to Hamath.' That place would seem to be the modern Hunîn, seven miles north of Kadesh, and in the valley which leads to Laish. From earliest times a place of importance and great strength, it is now a mass of ruins. The raiders rebuild the city of Laish, and call it Dan. Laish or Dan is now called Tell el Kâdy ('the mound of the judge'), a broad round Tell, a mile south of Hermon, standing prominently on the plain. Very fine springs exist, for the Jordan source is here. The top of the Tell comprises several acres. It would be difficult to find a more lovely situation than this; even now, on the west, are thickets of oak, oleander, and reeds. Here, at the extremity of the Holy Land, the graven image of Micah was set up, and 'all the time the house of God was in Shiloh'!

And now a personal story of the saddest kind, telling also

of the exceeding wickedness of the people of Gibeah of Benjamin. Gibeah is thought to be the Jeba not far from Michmash, close to Ramah, now thought to be north of Jerusalem. The Levite would not enter Jebus, because it was 'the city of a stranger.' He hopes for food and lodging amongst people of his own nation. All hospitality is denied him till an 'old man' takes him in. The conduct of the inhabitants of Gibeah shows how entirely they had forsaken the law of Moses. As to hospitality, their after-conduct proves they were steeped to the lips in vice and sin. And then a most awful story follows, which touches the hearts and calls up the anger of all Israel, who gather at Mizpeh ('the place of clear view'), a watch-tower. There are many places of that name in Palestine; it is thought to be the same place as Nob, near Sha'fât, just north of Jerusalem. Others think it Neby Samwîl, a lofty hilltop south of Gibeon. In the presence of all the Levite retells his story. Indignation rouses all the host. They send messengers to Gibeah to demand the 'base fellows' who did the foul deed; but the tribe of Benjamin protect them! Lost to every feeling of right, the rulers of that tribe defend the criminals. To what a depth had they not fallen! The battle begins, and, strange to say, Israel is defeated with great slaughter. Again they attempt an assault—again defeated. The son of Aaron asks counsel of God, and the third time they are to go. An ambush is made. The Benjamites are drawn from their strongholds by stratagem. The battle takes place, which Jewish tradition fixes as the large ruin Attâra, close to Gibeah, near 'the meadow of Geba'—Maareh-Geba. Benjamin is destroyed before Israel, and the remnant, 600 men, fly to the rock Rimmon, where they abode four months. The place is identified as Rŭmmôn, east of Bethel.

Major Conder describes it thus: 'A conspicuous position at the end of a narrow ridge. On the west the rock is

particularly steep; on the south are rude caves. The position is of great strength, as deep narrow valleys occur on three sides, so that it can only be reached easily from the north. On the east are the gorges and inaccessible precipices of the great ravine which runs from Taiyibeh to the Jordan Valley. From the rocky hilltop a fine view is obtained southwards.'

The whole of the sites of Gibeah, Ramah, etc., are visible. No other place is entitled to be called 'the rock,' and the name 'Rŭmmôn' is identical with Rimmon. It has been suggested that a cave called Jâi was the possible hiding-place. The place is impressive, but there seems to be no good reason to select this particular cave, for caves abound, and 'Jâi' would not accommodate 600 men; and Major Conder asserts that the Fellahîn must be mistaken that sixteen flocks of sheep, one hundred in each flock, have been folded in this cave. The victorious Israelites return to the cities, and burn them with fire. The Israelites took an oath that no one of the tribes should give their daughters to the Benjamites that remained for wives. They then assembled before God in Bethel, and 'wept sore' (Judges xxi. 2), when they remembered that one tribe was now lacking in Israel; they, moreover, had taken a 'great oath' that whosoever came not up to the assembly at Mizpeh should be put to death, and it was found that no one from Jabesh Gilead had come. A picked corps was then sent to destroy Jabesh Gilead, and only 400 maidens were saved. These maidens are given as wives to Benjamin, and still they lack. Jabesh Gilead was a town in Gilead, over the Jordan. It would appear it was a chief town, and opposite Bethshean. The name is preserved in Wâdy Yabes, a deep glen with a stream. The site is on a little hill called Deir, which simply means 'convent.' The ruins are grass-grown. These maidens had first been brought to the camp at Shiloh, and then sent as a peace-offering to the

Benjamites at the rock Rimmon. The position of Shiloh is well known, and now called Seilûn. The site is very closely described. 'On the north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.' A closer description will be given in the history of Eli and Samuel. It was the only place in the Holy Land where the writer ever saw vines being planted. The ground was being ploughed by a yoke of oxen, and the vine-roots put in immediately, a heap of stones being piled round the stems for the branches to trail over. In the vineyards the Benjamites hid; the dance begun; the men rushed down, and 'took them wives according to their number.' They returned to their old homes and rebuilt the cities. The comment of the historian, 'Every man did that which was right in his own eyes,' is pregnant with thought. A republic of disorder reigned. It is interesting to note that Rimmon was only eight miles away from Shiloh.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

THIS story opens with the family history of a 'certain man,' his home Ramathaim-zophim ('heights of the views'). It may be the Ramah er Ram, five miles east of Gibeon, on the summit of a hill, or it may be in Mount Ephraim, west of Shiloh, for the name is by some authorities said to mean 'the twin heights of the Zoophites'; for one of the Levitical families, Zuph, had settled there. The meaning of the word 'Zuph' has not been determined with certainty. The Targum gives the meaning 'to shine,' 'to be conspicuous.' It would probably be Mizpeh. The modern Arabic Khŭrbet Shûfa represents the Hebrew Zophim, and 'Shûfa' still denotes a district, and so may be the land of Zuph. The site is, however, uncertain. In this home lives Elkanah ('the god-acquired'). He had two wives: Hannah ('favour,' 'grace') and Peninnah ('pearl,' 'coral'). It may be that Hannah being childless was the cause of this double marriage. However that may be, the man went every year to worship and to sacrifice 'unto the Lord of hosts' at Shiloh. In distributing the portions, Elkanah gave a '*double* portion' to Hannah, for he loved her, though she was childless. It would seem that she was taunted on account of her barrenness by her rival, as it would be the case to-day, in Eastern life. Not once had this happened, but year by year, till Hannah, in

bitterness of soul, wept, and could not eat. The husband, full of love, tries to console her, by appealing to his great love as shown to her. It would seem that the worship at Shiloh was accompanied by feasting, for we read of eating and drinking. The woman, in bitterness of soul, wept sore, and prayed earnestly unto the Lord; but though her lips moved, her voice was not heard. She was opening her heart to the Lord, and her sorrow was too deep and tender. She was too pure and modest to utter *aloud* her wish for a son, but to God she makes a vow, that if a son is given her, he shall be a Nazarite for life. Here, once more, we see how intense was the desire of Hebrew women to give birth to a son, hoping that he might be the promised Deliverer. Eli, the old priest of Shiloh, sitting by the door-post, marked the moving of the woman's lips. Perhaps it was his presence which had made her so shy to utter aloud—in presence of a man—her prayer. Eli's question suggests that it was no uncommon thing to see women 'drunken.' We know how St. Paul reproves the early Christians for the same sin, at their feasts. Hannah repels the charge, and then Eli, recognising her sorrow and her piety, says, 'Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thy petition.' No longer sad, Hannah accepts this as the voice of God. In due time Samuel is born, but she says she will not go up to Shiloh till he is weaned. She intends to fulfil her vow. But the mother's heart longs to keep her only son as long as she can, till he is 'weaned.' How long would that be? Why, it is no uncommon thing to suckle the first-born son for seven years! Even now, to this very day, you can find women suckling children to five, six, and seven years. She takes the child to Eli, and explains that she is the woman who 'stood' and prayed. Here we see again the Eastern attitude of prayer. And now she says, as God gave the child to her, so now as

long as he lives 'he is granted to the Lord.' Be sure this mother had told her boy the story of her vow—had taught him to love the Lord; for 'he' worshipped the Lord with her. How deep her piety, how great her spiritual knowledge, we see in her song of praise; and though her heart would be sad at parting from her boy, yet she was happy that he 'did minister unto the Lord.' Year by year the happy mother comes up to Shiloh and sees her boy. She is ever thinking of him, and her glad hands make year by year a 'little robe' for him. And she has other children given her to gladden her heart. Eli the priest may have been a good man, but he had wicked sons—greedy, avaricious priests. They have a flesh-hook of '*three* teeth' to secure the best morsels for themselves! and yet they knew they were only entitled to 'what was left' (Lev. ii. 10). Eli reproves his sons for their many sins, but they heed him not. Their sins are not only of greed, but of lust, and they lead others astray, and are an open scandal. Eli neglected his duty; a mere reproof was not enough; he ought to have removed them from their office. Not doing so, he brought down the anger of a justly offended God on his race and on himself; so that he is told that all that is left of his race shall have to beg their bread. The child Samuel has grace given him so that he is protected and kept pure amidst so much sin. Then follows the revelation of God Himself to the boy. He is humbly obedient to the heavenly call, and to him is given the sad charge of telling Eli the will of God. Though he fears to tell it, yet his nature compels him to be truthful, and in the morning, after he had opened the doors of the house of the Lord, he, at Eli's request, told him 'every whit.' And now all Israel know that the Lord has a prophet in Shiloh, and they listen to the voice. In a secluded plain, surrounded by hills, still stand the ruins of Shiloh—'Seilûn'; its position, as before

remarked, is accurately described in the Book of Judges. But from the time of Jerome till 1838, it was a lost site. Hidden as it is by hills, it is yet a central position; so here in seclusion was the encampment of 'the tent which He had pitched among men.' Always called a 'tabernacle' or 'tent' is the place of God at Shiloh, until with wrath He 'forsook' it, because of the sins of the people. On a little knoll stand some confused ruins; in the hill, north, is a terrace with rocky sides. It is 77 feet wide and 412 feet long. There are several small cisterns close by, and Sir Charles Wilson proposes to identify this as the place where the tabernacle stood. According to Rabbinical traditions, it would be 'a structure of low stone walls with the tent drawn over the top.' Near the knoll is a fine oak-tree. The ruins are of several periods. The more massive wall seemed to me to be possibly Jewish. A spring, not far away, runs through an underground channel to a rock-cut well or tank. Ancient roadways, ten feet wide, and some old tombs, are now all that mark the place. When the writer halted here, the plain was rich in corn cultivation, and, just as we are told in Judges, three miles away stands the imposing village of Lebonah, now called Lubban.

Israel goes out to battle with the Philistines, and pitch beside 'Ebenezer,' or 'stone of help,' probably the 'Deir Abân,' near Beth-shemesh. This was the belief of the early Christians, and modern explorers support the idea, for this village stands at the mouth of the great valley down which, in later conflicts, the Philistines were driven. It, however, must have been near Mizpeh. The Aphek where the Philistines pitched is unknown; but the ruins of 'Belled el Foka' ('upper town'), near Gath, is a site suggested. Israel is defeated, and then, without asking counsel of God, they fetch the ark from Shiloh, and the two foul priests accompany it. In superstitious joy, the Israelites shout till the earth rang again. The Philistines

inquire the reason, and lose heart at the news. They are well acquainted with all the past history of Israel, and their doings in Egypt and the desert; but, like brave men, they wait not for the assault, and while the Israelites are confused by their rejoicings, they deliver a powerful attack. Israel is again defeated; the ark is captured and the priests slain! Far away in Shiloh sits the old man Eli, watching and trembling, and fearing the worst; but he feared mostly for the ark of God. He knew well it ought not to have been taken, and in charge, too, of such sinful men as his two sons. No blessing could come when man goes his own way without asking the blessing of God. A fugitive escapes, reaches the city of Shiloh, and relates his fearful story; his appearance alone tells the tale—rent clothes and earth upon his head, instead of the signs of success the people had fondly hoped to see—and now from the women especially come the shrill cries of woe. Eli, ninety-eight years old, has left the empty tabernacle, and sits by the wayside, hoping to get the first news, his eyes dim with age. The story of defeat is gasped out by the runner: 'Israel is fled,' 'thy two sons are dead,' and 'the ark of God taken.' When the last blow falls—the taking of the ark—Eli swoons, and, falling, breaks his neck and dies 'by the side of the gate!' and he had judged forty years. Phineas' wife now dies in bringing forth a son. At least she and Eli had been followers of the Lord, for with her dying lips she calls her son 'Ichabod' ('the glory has departed from Israel'). The Philistines take the ark to Ashdod, now Esdûd, in the plain of Philistia, a large village on a commanding height, the then house of Dagon. No ruins of great antiquity now exist. The sand-dunes from the sea have almost reached the village. It has a port on the coast, and though much silted up, there is still a small landing-place between reefs of rock, and ships occasionally touch. The sand-hills are covered with broken pottery, and large circular

cisterns, and other ruins, show it was even in later days an important place. The dress of the people of to-day resembles that of the Egyptian, and not the Palestine peasantry. The god Dagon is found fallen on his face, his head and hands cut off. The people of Ashdod are plagued, and they cry out that the ark is to be removed to Gath, another of the royal cities of Philistia, now called Tell es Safi ('the bright mound'), a position of great strength. Precipitous white cliffs, 100 feet high, exist on the north and west. The Tell itself is high; many caves exist, and a good well. Punishment falls on the people of Gath, who cry for the ark to be sent to Ekron, now the village 'Akir, six miles west of Gezer. Ekron ('the firm-rooted') now is but a mud village, its only antiquities two wells. The old town was probably built of unburnt bricks, like Egyptian villages, and so Zeph. ii. 4, punning upon the word Ekron ('the firm-rooted'), says it shall be 'rooted up.' The people of this town had heard of the plagues with which the other Philistine cities had been visited, and implored the lords to 'send away the ark'; but punishment fell all the same. During the seven months the ark was in the land of Philistia the land had various plagues, and the Septuagint adds that their fields were overrun with mice, hence the superstitious offerings made. The priests propose a curious plan. They remind the people of the land how the Egyptians were punished, and warn their own people not to harden their hearts. A new cart is made; two cows are selected who had never been yoked before; their young calves are taken from them, and the cows allowed to go their own way. Their mothers take the 'straight way' towards Beth-shemesh, 'lowing as they went,' pining, in short, for their young—a touch of nature. The Philistines anxiously watch them, and follow them to the border. Beth-shemesh ('the house of the sun'), now the 'Ain Shems ('the spring of the sun'), in the valley of Sorek, on the slopes of the

mountains of Judah, where there are heaps of stones and ruined walls. About seven miles from Ekron, on a low mound west of the present village, are ancient ruins, foundations, and walls of good masonry—some rock-cut tombs. There are fine plains near, where 'wheat-harvest' is still reaped. The Philistine lords gladly return to Ekron. They left their offerings by the 'great stone,' or, as the Hebrew and Targum has it, 'a meadow.' The men of Beth-shemesh were smitten because of their idle curiosity; but there must be a mistake in the numbers slain, as given in our version, for the Septuagint says seventy men; so says Josephus. The small site forbids the idea that 50,000 men were slain. The word 'Abel,' rendered 'great stone,' might more properly be given as 'the great stone of the meadow.' This was probably a boundary-stone between Philistia and Israel. In alarm the men of Beth-shemesh send to Kirjath-Jearim ('city of forest trees'). David, in Ps. cxxxii. 6, says: 'We found it in the field of the wood.' It has been commonly thought to be now represented by Kuriet el'Enab ('the city of grapes'); but a new site has been proposed by the officers of the Survey party—in 'Erma, which, on careful examination, seems to fulfil all the conditions required by the Biblical narrative. 'Erma is four miles east from Beth-shemesh; an ancient road leads direct to that place. 'Erma is in the mountains proper, 1000 feet higher than Beth-shemesh; the site is surrounded by thickets of lentisk, oak, hawthorn and other shrubs, which properly represent the Hebrew 'tangled,' or confused. The slopes of the hills are clothed with dense brushwood, arbutus karûb, and others besides those just mentioned; while there is a thick undergrowth of thyme, sage, and other plants. On a bold spur or platform of rock there is a knoll covered with fallen masonry, above a group of olives. This site is undoubtedly ancient: the rock scarps and old masonry of vineyard towers date back to a very early period; a fine rock cut wine-press, a great cistern, covered by a huge

hollowed stone, an evidently ancient cave, occurs, and the ground is strewn with fragments of ancient pottery. But the most curious feature of the site is the rock platform, the area of which is fifty feet north and south, by thirty feet east and west; the surface, artificially levelled, is ten feet above the ground outside. There is a small cave under the platform. The view from the ruins is extensive: the valley is seen winding 600 feet beneath; the broad vale of Sorek, extending close to Zoreah. Beth-shemesh is not in view, though the valley-bed north of that ruin is visible; the platform may be the 'Gibeah' ('high hill') where the ark was kept. To conclude: the name, the character of the ruin, the view, the surrounding thickets, the situation, all appear to indicate 'Erma as the site where the ark was kept twenty years. Moreover, this site, being so high above the valley, agrees with the words: 'Come *ye down*, and fetch it *up* to you;' and also it might be suggested that the platform of rock before spoken of was where the 'house of Abinadab' ('in the hill') stood. 'The time was long,' the house of God at Shiloh was desolate, and Israel 'lamented before the Lord.'

Samuel assures the people that if they put away the 'strange gods,' then the Lord God will deliver them out of the hand of their enemy. They do 'put away Baalim and Ashtaroth' (1 Sam. viii. 4), and he gathers them at Mizpeh. Water is poured out before the Lord. Was this to indicate that they were purified, or was it a type of that rite of baptism with water to repentance which was to herald in the great Deliverer? The Philistines hear of the gathering, and 'go up' from their low ground to attack Israel. 'A lamb' is then offered by Samuel—a type again of 'the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.' And now, as in the days of Barak, God thundered with a great *voice*. The enemy, seized with panic, fled in dismay, and the fugitives were smitten to Beth-car.

'The house of the Lamb'—that is, 'under' Beth-car—was where the pursuit stopped, and the stone Ebenezer was set up in the valley. This stone marked the termination of the rout of the Philistines. All the captured cities were retaken, 'from Ekron even unto Gath.' So from Mizpeh to Shen, 'the troth,' some high crag not identified, was where the 'stone of help' was placed. There was peace between Israel and 'the Amorites.' Does it mean that some of that race were in the low ground of Philistia, and no longer allied themselves with the Philistines, or that on the Amorite border there was peace? Anyhow, the Philistines no longer *attacked* Israel. The text implies that they stood on the defensive. To his home at Ramah Samuel returned; but he went a 'circuit' every year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and held a court of justice there. Far away south, at Beersheba, his two sons judged—greedy, covetous men; they took bribes, and perverted judgment. He being old, his rule was not strong enough, and so the sins of his sons brought on resentment. These 'unjust judges' brought fresh trouble on the land, and caused the nation to sin again in a new manner. They ask for a king. Solemnly warned that they are rejecting the rule of the Lord God, told in detail what it will bring upon them, the people refuse to hearken, and in anger God says: 'Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.' What an awful thing to be told that God will give an answer to men's cry, if that cry is unlike the Divine prayer, 'Not My will, but Thine, be done,' and He will grant a petition to the destruction of the suppliant! Ordered to go to their homes, the people depart; and now we read of Kish, and his son Saul—a goodly person, taller than any of the people. His father Kish loses his asses, and, with one servant, Saul is told to find the strayed herd. Through the land Shalishah—a place probably so called because three valleys *met*—and Shaalim ('the land of jackals')

they go, but find them not. Various attempts have been made to identify these names, but the matter is doubtful. That they were in the lowlands is probable. The search continues, and in the land of Zuph, Saul, a good son, finding his trouble in vain, now thinks of the anxious father at home, and proposes a return. The servants suggest appealing to a 'seer,' and then comes a pretty picture of the maidens going to draw water. They ask the maidens if the 'seer' is at home, and hearing that he is, they go up to the city to be met by Samuel, who had been warned by God that Saul would come, and that it was he who was to be the king. Unwittingly the young man asks for the seer, and is told that he is speaking to him. This would show that Saul was ignorant of Samuel's personal appearance. Asked to partake of food, Saul's mind is set at rest about the herd of asses, and then he is told he is the one desired by the people. Saul's modesty repels the idea—his is one of the smallest of the tribes, and his father one of the least even of that poor tribe. Why mock him? He is taken to the guest-chamber, and honour done in the presence of thirty persons. He has the chiefest place, the best bits of the dish, and then, after the repast, on the house-top, away from listeners, Samuel tells Saul. The secret is kept. The next day the servant is ordered to pass on. The vial of oil is poured on Saul; he is kissed by the old prophet. He is to see two men, whom the anxious father, now troubled about his son, has sent out. Then to the terebinth at Tabor he is to go. Men will meet him and provide him with food, and then he is to come to the hill of God—'Gibeah.' The Philistines have a garrison there. He is to meet prophets, and become one of them, and be 'turned into another man.' The inspiration of the occasion swept away the old life. He followed, alas! only for a short period the Divine will. He is to go to Gilgal, and Samuel will meet him there and offer

sacrifices. Saul is reticent, and tells not his uncle 'the matter of the kingdom.'

Samuel calls the people to Mizpeh, and by lot the tribe is taken, and then the house. But where is Saul? He had, partly in modesty, partly in fear, hid himself. He is brought forth and presented to the people as their king; for the first time in Israel rings out the cry, 'God save the king!' or, 'Let the king live!' an old Egyptian cry, as we see from the monuments to Rameses.

Every man is sent by Samuel to his own home, and Saul goes to Gibeah, thought by some to be Tell el Fûl, two and a half miles north of Jerusalem, but doubtful. Some men, 'whose hearts God had touched,' go with the new-made king; while base men refuse to acknowledge the ruler, and bring no presents, as do the others. Saul is prudent, and holds his peace.

It would appear from the story that one reason why the Israelites had asked for a king was because Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, had invaded the country. He had come to avenge the defeat by Jephthah, and now encamps at Jabesh-Gilead, across the Jordan, the suggested site of which is Wâdy el Yâbis, and the ruined site of Ed Deir, the people of which offer to surrender. But the invader adds a cruel and disgraceful condition, as a reproach to Israel. He feels so secure of final victory that he grants seven days' respite before his conditions are to be acceded to. Saul is told. It sounds strange that the king should have been following a yoke of oxen. It proves the primitive times. No wonder his anger is excited when Saul hears the story, and sees, too, the cowardly people he is ruler over 'weep.' He cuts in pieces a yoke of oxen, and threatens if Israel come not out to him he will do so to their oxen, an Eastern threat of greatest power, for the Jew loved his possessions. The writer was once in great

trouble with Bedawîn, and he threatened to shoot, not the men, but a fine camel, which stood close by, and they gave in. So now, fearing the loss of their property, the people come to Bezek, probably the site Khŭrbet Ibzîk, fourteen miles from Nablus, a central position, one day's march from Jabesh-Gilead. It is a little north of Tirzah, on the eastern slope of the highest part of Gilboa. A main road leads to the fords of the Jordan. There are fine springs near, so a fit place for an army to assemble. At Ibzîk there are ancient ruins, cisterns, and caves. A huge array of fighting men is collected. The people of Jabesh-Gilead are told of the coming help, and they send their answer to Nahash, promising submission. Again comes the story of loose discipline of the invading army. 'In the morning watch,' and by an attack on both flanks and rear, as in the story of Gideon, the Ammonites are entirely defeated; and, moreover, the objectors to Saul's reign are silenced, now that their new king has conquered. The people propose to punish those who had before insulted the king. Saul attributes rightly the victory to God, and refuses to sully his victory by slaying his personal enemies.

Samuel takes advantage of the victory to call the people to Gilgal and ratify the kingdom there, which is done with great rejoicing. Samuel, in a farewell address, challenges the Israelites to say if he personally had ever done them wrong, taken bribes, or oppressed them. Here, between the lines, we see that he knew his sons had been charged with so doing. He then recalls all their past history, and again tells them they have sinned in demanding a king. A strange thing then happens. It is wheat harvest—the time of dry weather—never till then had it been known to rain at that time; and now, and at the bidding of Samuel, thunder and rain alarm the people. Samuel repeats he will pray for them, and entreats them to give their hearts to God. And now Saul

is left to govern. He takes two thousand men to Michmash and Bethel, and to his son Jonathan, in Gibeah, one thousand. Michmash, now Mŭkhmâs, is seven miles north of Jerusalem; it is on the northern edge of the great Wâdy Suweinît ('the valley of the acacias'), the main pass between the highlands and the Jordan Valley. The small garrison of Geba (Gibeah), held by the Philistines, was smitten by Jonathan. The attack was sudden and unexpected. The carrying of this outlying post enrages the Philistines, who gather an immense army, and Saul retreats to Gilgal, in the Jordan Valley, as we see from the remark, later on, that many 'Hebrews went over Jordan to Gad and Gilead.' The frightened Israelites hide themselves in caves and in the dense thickets of the hill-slopes; many even hide in the pits or cisterns. Saul, still in Gilgal, is surrounded by a trembling, cowardly people, who had at the first shock forgotten the deliverance over the Ammonite king. The Beth-aven where the Philistine army camped is not identified. Near this, however, was 'the pasture-land' of Beth-aven.

The position held by the Philistine army was on the south side of the 'valley of thorns'; north was the small town of Michmash, and the *district* was called Gibeah, from Geba, its town.

Seven days pass, and Samuel comes not, and then Saul offers sacrifice. No sooner done than the old prophet appears. Saul tries to excuse his unlawful deed. The prophet sternly reproves him, and foretells the speedy end of his reign. He had been tested; had done foolishly, and he is sharply told a successor is appointed by God. Samuel leaves the king and goes to Gibeah, and Saul then finds his followers have melted away. He now only has 600 men. Jonathan boldly holds on to his advanced post, and the Philistines send out flying columns. One goes the way to Ophrah, thought to be represented by Et Taiyibeh, a few miles east of Bethel.

Now, this place is said to have been near Zeboim ('valley of wild beasts'), and near Taiyibeh is a valley called by the Arabs 'hyena's lair,' a wâdy which leads to the wilderness. It was in the wilderness, or uncultivated country: the land of Shual was near, but it cannot with certainty be identified. The remaining column went towards Beth-horon, more to the westward. These flying columns or 'spoilers' seem to have been sent to destroy the smithies, so that there was no place for the Hebrews to sharpen their iron implements of war—nay, even of husbandry—so no sword, or spear, nor even ox-goad, was it possible to sharpen. Did the Philistines remember the old story of Shamgar? Jonathan, taking only his armour-bearer, goes to examine the Philistine camp. The country is closely described: 'between the passes' there was a rocky crag, called Bozez ('shining') on one side, and a crag called Seneh ('the acacia') on the other. The one was north, in front of Michmash; the other south, in front of Geba. The text gives the story of their going up; their attack on the Philistine outpost; their defeat, and then 'the trembling of God' through the host, and their consequent flight. It is most interesting to study on the spot the scene of this victory. The great gorge which has its head west of Ai becomes one of vertical precipices 800 feet high—so sudden you only become aware of it when close to it. On the south side of this gorge stands Geba of Benjamin, on a rocky knoll; and on the opposite side, below, Michmash, on a sort of saddle, backed by an open and fertile corn valley. This valley was always the main defence, north of Jerusalem. The modern name of this great valley is 'Suweinît' ('valley of the little thorn-tree'—acacia). The site of the Philistine camp is said by Josephus to have been a precipice with three tops ending in a long sharp tongue, and protected by surrounding cliffs. East of Michmash, such a natural fortress still exists, and is called

'the fort' by the peasantry. It is a ridge rising in three rounded knolls above a perpendicular crag, ending in a narrow tongue to the east, with cliffs below.

THE VALLEY OF MICHMASH.

Opposite this fortress, on the south, there is a crag of equal height and seemingly impassable, so the Bible description is

exact—'a sharp rock on one side, and a sharp rock on the other.'

The great valley runs east; so the southern cliff is in shade during the day, and is in cool, dark colour, while the northern cliff gleams white, with some ruddy tones in it. Therefore the camping-ground of the Philistines would look white.*

Jonathan 'climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armour-bearer after him.' It must have required a cool head and steady nerve to climb this cliff. To look at it now it seems impossible, but it has been done by Major Conder and the Survey party. It is interesting to note that the cliffs are full of caves, and we are told 'the people did hide themselves in caves, in thickets, in rocks in high places, and in pits.'

The Hebrews who were with the Philistines now turned against them; from all the hill country Israel passed out. The pursuit goes on to Beth-aven, the wilderness east of Bethel. Saul has seen the flight and joined in the battle. He rashly had forbidden the fainting people to eat, and trouble comes of it; for the people were too feeble to follow the defeated enemy till the pursuit stayed at Ajalon. Saul proposes a night attack, but asks counsel of God. In time he finds Jonathan had tasted the honey, and the enraged father says he shall die. The people rescue Jonathan, whom they love. And now we read of constant war. Saul is everywhere victorious—Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah—a district extending north-east and eastward of Cœle-Syria towards the Euphrates—the Philistines also; Saul's family is then mentioned, and the 'sore war' with the Philistines. Samuel gives him commands from the Lord to go and smite Amalek, that old foe of the desert, whose attack on Moses was never to be forgiven. In Telaim ('the place of lambs') the people are gathered.

* Conder.

The place has not been identified; but it must have been one of the cities of the extreme south of Judah. Saul comes to the city of Amalek; it is not named. Saul plans an ambush, but secretly warns the Kenites, because of the kindness that tribe had shown in the past days when Israel was in need; and now from Havilah to Shur the Amalekites are smitten. Shur ('the desert of the wall'), between Egypt and Syria, is well known. Havilah was on the border 'as thou goest to Assyria.' Saul does not carry out the commands he has received, and Samuel is wroth. Saul goes to Carmel, and sets up 'a monument,' or, as the Hebrew has it, 'a hand.' This Carmel—not the hill one on the sea-coast *west*—was a town of Judah *south*, now called Kŭrmŭl, about seven miles from Hebron; some large bevelled stones, like Jewish masonry, are found there. East of this is pure desert. Was Saul putting up a Phœnician monument? for those had '*hands*' on them. At Gilgal, the old camp of Joshua, Samuel finds the king, reproaches him for his disobedience to the commands of God, and warns him that he is now 'rejected.' The stern old prophet 'hewed Agag in pieces,' returned to his own home at Ramah, and never saw Saul again, though he 'mourned for him.' Saul went to his home at Gibeah. And now we get the call of David, full of interest, but lying outside the compass of this book. The Philistines have recovered from their defeats, and they again begin to attack. They gather at Socoh, between Azekah and Ephes-dammim—the latter name, 'boundary of blood.' Socoh, now Kh. Shuweikeh, is on the north side of the valley of Elah, while Azekah lies on the south. The valley of Elah rises near Hebron, passes Socoh, and then opens into the Philistine plain. It was the highway from the plain to the hill country. Elah is 'valley of the terebinth,' and is now called Wâdy es Sŭnt ('valley of the acacia'). Terebinths still grow there, and one is the largest of its kind in Palestine. Ephes-dammim is

probably Beit Fased ('house of bleeding'). A small torrent runs through the valley, rippling over smooth stones. Saul, coming from Gilgal, would naturally take the road which, coming from Jerusalem, cuts the valley of Elah, where still exists a ruin, called 'House of Bloodshed.' There is a valley between the Israelites and the Philistines, into which comes Goliath, who taunts the Israelites, and challenges them to single combat. He does this for forty days. The Israelites are greatly afraid; no man dares to meet Goliath. The story then goes to the home of Jesse at Bethlehem; he is desirous of sending food to his sons, three of whom were with Saul. David is sent; he hears the taunting words, and demands why this Philistine should defy the 'armies of *the living God*.' His brother answers him in anger—'I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart' (1 Sam. xvii. 28)—it is the case of Joseph over again. This lad David had faith in God, which the Israelites and his own brother did not possess. David, full of zeal for God, declares he will go and fight. He tells what he had done to the lion and the bear; and as God enabled him to overcome them, so God will deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine. We know the whole story of how these opponents met—one scornful, the other putting his trust in the Lord. Out of the brook David had chosen 'the five smooth stones,' just as anyone might choose them now. With the shepherd's sling—still used by the shepherd boys of this region—he smote the champion of the Philistines in the forehead, and with the fallen man's sword cut off his head.

Struck with panic, the Philistines fly; they acknowledge in the death of their champion that the hand of God is against them. To Gath*—to the very gates of Ekron ('the firm-

* So says the Authorised Version, but the Revised Version reads Gai: 'ravine.' In this valley there is a deep trench—a natural barrier between the hosts.

rooted')—the wounded struggled: to Shaaraim ('the two gates'), now thought to be Kh. S'aireh, in the valley, west of Beit Atâb (Etam). Their camp is spoiled.

Saul did not know David; and Abner, his chief captain, was equally ignorant. The boy's life had been lived away from camp or court. He tells the king his name, and the brave warrior Jonathan knits 'with the soul of David.' No envy in that noble heart; but the bad passion soon rose in the heart of the king, because the women sung the young champion's praises with timbrels and dances, just as would be done now by Easterns in this very year of grace. The story of Saul's hatred and false dealing is related in full; but David behaves himself wisely. The pure heart of Jonathan is now shocked by a foul command from his father. He tries to alter his father's mind. Of no avail; deed after deed, plot after plot, fails against David, who flies to Samuel at Ramah.

Together he and the old prophet go to Naioth ('dwellings'); probably a block of tents or buildings in which dwelt a company of the prophets. It would be near Ramah, and yet a safer place for David than that village. The site is unknown. Saul tries to take David, without result. He himself went to the great well, or 'the well of the threshing-floor,' in Secu, or Sechu, probably a place between Ramah and Gibeah; and it is suggested that Kh. Shuweikeh, immediately south of Beeroth, is the site. Saul felt the same influence that his messengers had succumbed to, and joined the prophets, laying aside his upper garments. He lay down 'naked'; this is an Eastern way of speaking—a man was 'naked' when deprived of his outer robes.

David fled from Naioth now that the king was there, only consoled by the abiding love of Jonathan, who proposes to try once more to appease the unjust anger of his father. The two friends make a vow of everlasting friendship, and the

king's son is said to have loved David 'as he loved his own soul.' A plan is agreed upon, and Jonathan goes to the feast. When Jonathan excuses the non-appearance of David, the enraged king tries to kill his own son, who leaves him in anger; and then, by the proposed plan, David is told of his extreme danger. David then went to Nob, a city of the priests. The 'Hill of God' was probably Nob. It is most probably Sha'fât ('view') or Sôma', a ruin quite close by, where there are cisterns and ruins of large masonry. Sha'fât has also cisterns and ruins; but both places are so completely ruined, and either would suit the text, that it is a matter of small moment.

David does not tell Abimelech that he is a fugitive, but obtains some of the sacred bread, and the sword of Goliath; and so provided he flies to Gath. He had, however, been seen by one Doeg, an Edomite. Alarmed by the recognition of Achish's servants, David feigns madness. Then, as now, madmen are looked upon by Easterns as sacred—a people whom God has especially under His care, and whom it would be uncanny to meddle with. So David is allowed to escape out of the hands of the Philistines. And now David goes to Adullam. His brethren and his father's house, who had doubtless felt the anger and hatred of Saul, go to him, and so does a large company of 400 men; and the once captain of Saul's host is now captain of this discontented band. There were two places of the name of Adullam—one a city in the low country, probably the one mentioned in Gen. xxxvii. 1-12, 20, and the other the 'cave.'

I have read the Rev. W. F. Birch's papers on the Cave of Adullam (Quarterly Statement, 1884), and also papers by the Rev. H. Brass (Quarterly Statement, July, 1890) on the Cave of Adullam, and now must give up Major Conder's proposed 'Adullam,' and go back to the old caves in Wâdy Khureitûn,

near Bethlehem. 'These are the most remarkably situated caves in the side of the grandest and wildest gorges in Palestine. A few resolute men could defend the pass against a host. There are three caves opening one into the other; the first is lofty and of considerable size, and could easily accommodate four hundred men, and was found dry and dusty even at the end of the rainy season. It was in David's own country. It was but three or four miles from Bethlehem, and from it the hills above Bethlehem could be easily seen encompassed by the Philistines.'

Adullam is ruinous, not deserted; the sides of the valley are lined with caves, some now used to fold flocks and herds. There is one separate cave with ample accommodation for 400 men. The hill is 500 feet high, and the whole of the country of David's exploits with the Philistines is close at hand.*

David, good son and prudent captain, now wishes to place his father and mother, non-combatants, in safety, so goes to Mizpeh of Moab. This place has not been identified, but it is suggested that Sûf, three miles from Reimŭn, across Jordan, may be the place. The King of Moab held court there—it would be near the Pisgah of old-time history—while David went to the 'hold.' Was this Mizpeh of Moab or the cave? David's relationship to Ruth the Moabitess would justify his asking such a favour of the Moab king. God advises David not to stay in the 'hold'; it would imply, therefore, that the 'hold' was Mizpeh of Moab, and the prophet feared the King of Moab would surrender David to Saul, so David now goes to the 'forest of Hareth.' M. Ganneau proposed Herche ('forests') near Yalo, while the Septuagint reads 'city of Hareth.' The name is probably preserved in Kharâs, a village in the Hebron mountains near Adullam, where dense

* Conder.

patches of scrub abound. A main road passes through Kharâs.

Under the tamarisk-tree on the heights of Gibeah, Saul holds his court, spear in hand, showing his warlike intentions. He charges his servants with being traitors. He tauntingly asks what can they expect from the son of Jesse. He declares that his own son is a chief offender against him, and that really he (Jonathan) was the prime mover against him. 'My son had stirred up my servant against me.' He knew—none better—how untrue this charge was. He adds another charge, equally false, that David was lying in wait for him. And then Doeg tells his story, doubtless with ample colouring. Saul sends for all the priests; charges them with conspiring also against him. They were innocent, but it was the lamb and the wolf over again. He orders their execution, and none but Doeg will execute the butchery. All are slain—Nob taken—even the very animals killed, and only one priest escapes to tell David the terrible story. Saul had indeed cast off all restraints by destroying the Lord's anointed priests. David had feared this, but no time has he for private sorrow. An incursion of the Philistines occupies his thoughts. Keilah ('fortress') is being harried by the foray—the corn stolen. The site is satisfactorily identified with Khŭrbet Kîla, a ruined village seven miles from Beit Jibrin; it is near Harith, and on the low ground, which accounts for the expression 'go down,' and it was a key to the hill-country, and had fertile corn-lands about it. Victory crowns David's attack. Saul hears of it, and proposes to surround the town. It has 'gates and bars.' Though delivered from their enemy by David, yet the people of Keilah intend to deliver David to Saul. David now marches into the mountains southwards to the Hebron hills and the desert of Judah—the wilderness of Ziph, which is included in that larger term, 'The wilderness of Paran' of Genesis. It is now known as the

'Desert of the Tîh,' or 'Desert of the Wanderings.' Close to this mountain chain there still exists a ruined mound, called Tell Zîf. 'The mound of Ziph,' a single day's march from Keilah, which is a desolate region, full of broken ground, abounding in caves and deep gullies—a waterless desert which sinks down towards Engedi, having no vegetation but the white broom and the alkali plant. Ibex course in droves over the plains, and the desert partridge runs by the rain pools. In 1 Sam. xxvi. 20 David compares himself to a hunted partridge. That bird rarely will take to its wings, but runs along the ground, as the writer has often noticed. The word 'wood' of Ziph is doubtful. The Septuagint and Josephus call it 'the new place.' If so, the village Khŭrbet Khoreisa, one mile from Ziph, is a suggested site. Jonathan is in the secret, and goes to 'strengthen' David. The two friends hold communion together, and together renew their vow of friendship 'before the Lord.' Some of the Ziphites propose to betray David, who is in the hill of Hachilah. This would appear to be the long ridge now called El Kôlah, where there is a high hill with a ruin, called Yŭkîn. Deep valleys run on two sides of the hill; it faces the desert solitude. The Ziphites are encouraged by Saul, who wishes to know David's exact whereabouts, and then he will come. They go in advance, but David has left for the wilderness of Maon, which was in the wilderness of Paran, a district of the greater waste; where stands a conical hill some hundred feet high, with a ruined tower, some caves, and cisterns. One stone in the tower wall is three feet eight inches long, and two feet nine inches high. Its present name is Tell M'aîn, which well represents 'Maon,' and is about seven miles south of Hebron. Rugged valleys and ravines surround it. Anyone who sees it can understand how it was that David was enabled to escape Saul when he compassed the place.

The Sela-hammahlekoth ('rock of divisions') is identified

with the great Wâdy Malâki ('the valley of smooth stone'), which with vertical cliffs cuts between Carmel and Maon. Saul had been called away by news of a Philistine raid. David goes further east to Engedi, the wildest and grandest scenery in Palestine. Savage cliffs of immense height, impassable ravines, grand views of the Dead Sea and Moab, mark this region, 'the rocks of the wild goats.' An expedition the writer made with some Bedawîn in this region will ever live in his memory as the wildest scenery he ever saw, not even excepting the Sinai mountains—not 'grand' in mountain form, but savage, desolate wâdies and gorges, with arid hills and small plains, devoid of vegetation, on which one sometimes found the desert-partridge or sand-grouse, which is a rapid runner, and generally has to be shot on the ground; the Bedawîn sportsmen wait 'till he stops!'

Engedi, now called 'Ain Jîdy ('the spring of the kid'), is the water-supply of the wilderness of Engedi. Its ancient name was Hazezon Tamar ('the pruning of the palm'); its cliffs then, as now, were the strongholds of the 'wild goats' or Syrian ibex. David has returned to this place. Saul comes to the 'sheepcotes.' These folding-places for sheep or goats were usually made by building a low stone wall across the mouth of a cave—caves are common in all this region—and when made into a sheepcoté the stone wall is usually surmounted by thorn bushes. Sometimes this enclosure was outside the cave, which was only used in cold or bad weather; the same custom exists all over the hill country of Palestine even now. David in the dark would easily see Saul, who, coming out of the light, would be unable to distinguish anything. To show how close they must have been, David cut off a bit of Saul's robe. The better nature of Saul asserts itself, and he acknowledges that David has returned good for evil, and for the time he withdraws from the pursuit and returns home.

Samuel dies, and David goes to the wilderness again; probably the great heat would drive him from Engedi, and in this we may perhaps get an indication of the season of the year when these events took place. Maon was the place where Nabal was shearing his sheep. There is a fine reservoir of water here, and even now it is surrounded by herds and camels of the Arabs. A little corn and maize is grown in the valleys also; at the ruins are traces of winepresses, showing that grapes had been cultivated.

We then have the story of the churlish man, who, though David and his men had acted as a 'wall' towards his possessions, keeping at bay the raiders from Amalek or Philistia, yet refuses to give them any acknowledgment. Here again we have a picture the like of which can be seen even now—what David asked for was 'backsheesh'! The man's sudden death, and Abigail becoming David's wife, is all in accordance with Oriental story. We are told that David's wife Michal had been given before to a man of Gallim, probably now the Beit Jâla, near Bethlehem.

Again the treacherous Ziphites tell Saul that David has come back to the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert. By his spies David gets accurate information of Saul's camp. The king 'lay within the place of the waggons,' what we now would call a 'zareba,' his people about him. By night David and Abishai are able to penetrate the enclosure. The upright spear shows where the king sleeps; and so careless are his guards that they sleep, too: 'a deep sleep of the Lord had fallen on them.' With the spear and the water-bottle David retires to a mountain afar off, and then by shouts rouses the guard. Abner awakes to find what a poor watch he had kept. Saul, again repentant, returns to his home.

Let us see now what the country is like.

From Hebron south to Maon there are a long succession of

rounded ridges, deep wâdies falling sharply to the desert. Hachilah is probably where the ruins of Yŭkîn now stand. The ridge El Kolah is four miles east of Yŭkîn. A good road following the watershed, and leading south to Ziph, still exists. Ruins, with caves and cisterns, stand on the steep slope, and then far away the long ridge of Moab, with steep precipices, with the great plateau of Kerak and the volcanic gorge of Callirhoe, make a view of savage wildness unsurpassed. Now, the whole of David's wanderings were in a small bit of territory, rarely more than twenty miles in a radius from Bethlehem. He generally put that city between himself and Saul; from that place he probably received early information of all the king's movements. David, becoming tired of his hunted life, takes refuge amongst his old enemies the Philistines. He goes to Gath. It was the border town, and the Philistine king would appear to have thought this band of 600 men would be useful to him to protect his frontier. Ziklag, the city given to David, is by some thought to be the present ruin 'Asluj,' south of Beersheba, by Conder thought to be Khirbet Zuheilîkah, seventeen miles north-west of Beersheba. The ruins are on three hills, half a mile apart. This would seem to be a suitable position, for it was on the confines of Philistia, Judah, and Amalek.

David now makes raids, but always on the old inhabitants of the land; amongst others, smiting the old foe Amalek. Sparing no lives, he deceives the king by telling him he had gone in quite a different direction, and the Philistine ruler believed David, and, considering that he would now be hated for ever by Israel, congratulates himself that this powerful freebooter would be his servant for 'ever.'

The sacred historian tells of the deceit, but does not excuse it.

Now the Philistines summon a great army. David and his

men are to go also. Up from the low country they pass to the plain of Jezreel, and pitch their camp at Shunem, now called Sôlam, a little village under the hill of Moreh, their face south towards the mountains of Gilboa, where Saul is camped. The Aphek may be the present Jebel Fukû'a, a large village on the top of a spur surrounded with olive gardens, and supplied by cisterns east and west of the village, a suitable position for the headquarters of the invaders. Saul's position was a weak one; behind him were the steep slopes of Gilboa, giving him no safe retreat. Both flanks were also exposed to the Philistine attack, and the Philistines had all the advantage of the ground, for the land slopes from Shunem towards Gilboa. Saul, alarmed, goes to a witch at Endor. Now, Endor was *behind* the Philistine camp, at the *northern* side of the hill of Moreh; so Saul in his night journey must have made a long detour to the east, and then, climbing the extreme eastern slope of Moreh, would drop down to Endor, which is now called Endôr. It takes its name from a spring, 'the spring of Dor.' There, just above the village is a natural cave, and the spring trickles from it; it would be eight or nine miles from Saul's camp. The place now is a miserable village, the hillside full of caves, and crumbling heaps of ruined buildings on the hill-slope. Gilboa is a high barren range of mountains, which separates the southern plain of Jezreel from the central portion, which slopes between Gilboa and the hill of Moreh. On the top of the mountain a village exists with the name Jelbôn, at its foot the spring of Gideon. The Philistine attack was probably on the west, which would be the weakest point of Saul's position, and his men would be driven into the rugged waterless ridges of the upper portions of the chain, and escape would be impossible. Fatigued by his night march—and, moreover, his anxiety had prevented him taking any food 'all day or night' —Saul was still more distressed by the night vision, and had

little courage to meet the attack made early in the morning by the Philistine host. Owing to the protests of the Philistine lords, David had been compelled to leave the Philistine host, and went back to his home at Ziklag, only to find that an Amalekite raid had successfully carried off his wives, the wives of his men, sons and daughters, and that his city was burnt with fire. David's rough-mannered band speaks of stoning him, but 'he strengthened himself in the Lord his God.' Ordered by God to pursue the raiders, David comes to the brook Besor. The word means the brook, some small stream south of Ziklag, running through some of the numerous wâdies hereabouts. Its exact position is unknown. An Egyptian is found who had been without food or water three days and three nights. Being revived by food, he swears to bring the avengers to the Amalekite camp. As usual, the raiders were feasting after their victory, never dreaming that David had returned to Ziklag. Again burst the avengers on the foe 'in the twilight,' and even unto the evening of the next day the running fight continues; none escape, except 400 young men, who succeeded in mounting their swift dromedaries and fled. Everything is recovered, with the addition of much spoil, for the raid had swept other cities of Judah besides David's town of Ziklag. Now, in the days of prosperity some of the 'wicked' men of David's band murmur at the proposed distribution of the spoil. David gently reminds them that it is from the Lord, and not of their own might, that success has come; and so their incipient mutiny was averted, and a custom established that those who fought, and those who did not, should share and share alike. And now David, ever generous, forgets not his friends. To all quarters he sends portions of the great spoil. Probably many towns and districts had suffered from the Amalekite raid, so to Bethel, just north of Jerusalem; to Ramoth in the south; to Jattir, now 'Attîr, ten miles from

Hebron; to Aroer, now 'Ar'arah, twelves miles east of Beersheba; to Siphmoth, unknown, but one of David's haunts in the south of Judah; to Rachal, another lost site; to the cities of the Jerahmeelites (these dwelt on the south of Judah, and nearest Egypt, and were Egyptians, one of whom was allied to Sheshan, as we see by 1 Chron. ii. 34, which alliance took place in the days of Eli); to the cities of the Kenites—that tribe who had always befriended the Israelites, from the days of Moses to those of Sisera; on to Hormah, south of Beersheba, of which Zephath is one site proposed, while east of Beersheba is another ancient site, Khŭrbet Hôra, which by some is thought likely; to Cor-ashan, unknown; to Athach, unknown, and lastly to Hebron—to all these places presents are sent, 'those places where David and his men were wont to haunt.'

While this has been going on, David has been in complete ignorance of the result of the Philistine invasion—but a king without hope soon suffered defeat. The Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. Severely wounded by the powerful archery of the Philistines—which force was doubtless armed like those Egyptian archers so fully represented on the monuments—the wretched king is soon overtaken, and dies—Jonathan, too, with the other two sons. The panic-stricken Israelites saw the death of their chosen king, the Lord's anointed; and those on the other side of the valley—that towards Bethshean—as well as those across the Jordan fords, fled—forsook their cities—and the Philistines took possession. So now by this victory the invader had cut the land in twain—driven a wedge between the south and the north. It would seem that the battle lasted all day, or, rather, the slaughter; for it is only on the morning of the next day that the victorious enemy discovers that the Israelitish king is slain. Cruel even to a fallen foe, they cut off his head, strip off his armour, and

ell the glad news to their idols! They hail it as a victory over Jehovah! They place the armour in the house of the foul goddess Ashtaroth, while the mutilated body is fastened to the walls of Bethshan. And out of all Israel none show kindness or gratitude to the memory of the unhappy king but those men of Jabesh-Gilead, far across the Jordan, who by a night march secretly recover the poor bodies of Saul and his sons, take them to Jabesh, and then burn them in solemn assembly, and bury their bones under the great tamarisk-tree in Jabesh. More than this, they fasted seven days.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

WHAT a picture of life—the life of every man—is the concluding chapter of the first book of Samuel! David victorious, dividing spoil, feasting and rejoicing, and hard by—he quite ignorant of it—defeat and death: the death of his old foe, and of his dearly-loved friend. Three days pass of feasting after victory, and then David hears the appalling news of the utter defeat of Israel. The man's heart is sound. He forgets all the trouble, the privations, King Saul had brought on him personally. He sorrows for Saul and his son. He recognises the devotion of Jonathan in dying with his father. He knew —none better—how that son had differed from his father, and yet clung to him—filial love took him even to death. David rises over private quarrels. He cries, 'They'—Saul and Jonathan—'were lovely in their lives.' He recalls 'their prowess,' and then the man's heart breaks down in the bitter wail, 'O Jonathan! my brother! thy love!' All—all so deep. No woman's love so deep. And the warrior's lament comes out again, 'How are the mighty fallen!'

David had been resting and feasting in Ziklag, when a fugitive from Saul's army arrived. His dress and demeanour told the tale of disaster.

He, 'by chance,' had witnessed the battle—had seen the wounded king smitten by the Philistine archers and self-

wounded by his own sword. From the story told by this Amalekite, Saul, in his anguish, had asked this stranger to put him out of his misery—'for anguish is come upon me.' The Amalekite does as requested, and brings 'the crown' and 'the bracelet that was on his arm' to David. How is it that this 'young' man could get in 'three days' from Gilboa to Ziklag? Probably he had been one of that marauding band of Amalekites who had 'smitten the south of Judah,' and, wandering further than his companions, had 'by chance' seen what he related to David; and he, too, was probably mounted on a swift dromedary, like those 400 young men who escaped from the slaughter of the Amalekite host. Otherwise the distance would render it almost impossible for a man *on foot* to compass the distance. Instead of reward, David ordered him to be slain.

Then David goes to Hebron, and is made king over the *house of Judah.* Hebron—now called El Khŭlîl ('the friend of God,' or 'friend of the Merciful One;' *i.e.*, Abraham)—is said to be the oldest town not now in ruins in the world. It has no walls, but the ends of the main streets which run down towards the high roads have gates. The principal building is the Haram enclosure. Its original name was Kirjath Arba* ('the city of Arba'). 'Arba was a great man among the Anakims, father of Anak' (Josh. xiv. 15). It was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt (Num. xiii. 22), well known at Abram's entrance into Canaan, more than 3,790 years ago. It is about a day's march, or twenty Roman miles, south of Jerusalem.

It is a hill city, being 3,029 feet above sea-level, and, though so old, is still a thriving place. Its interest is in connection with the histories of Abraham and David. The dust of the

* Some authorities translate 'Hebron,' 'the city of the allies,' and Kirjath Arba, 'the city of the four (allies).'

patriarchs—nay, even their very bodies—may remain, for they were embalmed, and we have seen of recent times how the bodies of Seti I. and Rameses II. have been discovered, unrolled and photographed. So in the Cave of Machpelah may still be the bodies of Sarah and Abraham, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah.

What remains for future explorers is to get access to the cave itself; it probably has not been entered for 700 years at least.

It is interesting to note that the Cave of Machpelah is only mentioned in the Bible in connection with the patriarchs; there is no reason to think that any building was erected on the spot before the Captivity.

Major Conder is of opinion that the masonry of the walls is Herodian. Sir Charles Wilson adds that 'it would almost seem as if the Hebron Haram were a copy in miniature of the Temple enclosure at Jerusalem.' He thinks that there is some concealed entrance to the cave, known to the Moslems.

Almost all other travellers consider the walls to be the work of Solomon or of David, and Josephus extols the beauty of the edifice, and does not claim it for Herod; this is, to say the least, most remarkable. There are two reservoirs of massive stone, one at the south, the other at the north end of the city. The former is considered to be 'the pool' by which David hanged the murderers of Ish-bosheth.

Though David may be King of Judah, yet Abner, the old captain of Saul's hosts, will not acknowledge him, but clings to his master's line; and so Ish-bosheth ('man of shame')—the youngest of Saul's sons—is made King of Israel, and reigns two years. His name seems given in some contempt of Baal, for his original name was Esh baal. Abner was his kinsman, and he had been taken first to Mahanaim, that

sanctuary over the Jordan, and some years—five, probably—had elapsed before Abner felt himself strong enough to proclaim Ish-bosheth King of Israel, for Ish-bosheth was thirty-five at the battle of Gilboa and forty when he 'began to reign over Israel.'

The old foemen—Abner and Joab—with their bodyguards, met at Gibeon, by the 'great pool.' The respective troops 'sat down' on opposite sides of the pool. Gibeon, now called El Jib, is a strange, rounded and terraced hill, east of Beth-horon. The rock is scarped in places, and is a strong position, well supplied with water. Eight springs issue from the hill, and on the south-east a very strong spring, called 'spring of the village,' issues from a rock chamber, thirty feet long, seven feet wide, and seven feet high. The water is clear and abundant, and is three or four feet deep. Other springs are close at hand. One spring, called El Birkeh, issues from a chamber in a rocky scarp into a tank cut in the rock. This tank is eleven feet by seven feet. There is another tank, fifty-nine feet long, thirty-six feet wide, but it has some appearance of being of comparatively recent date. There are other springs north-west of the village, one giving *salt* water. There are many old tombs—some important. Abner proposes some 'play' with the young men. It turns to deadly feud. Twelve of one and twelve of the other side 'fell down together,' and the place is called 'the field of strong men.' A terrible battle between the two forces ensues. It reads like an old version of 'Chevy Chase.' Then follows the account of Asahel's death, after fair warning by Abner. Ammah, the hill where the pursuit was stayed, has not been identified. Giah ('the ravine'), by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon, is also some unknown ravine; but the whole country thereabouts is wild, and full of difficult passes. Abner proposes a truce, to which Joab agrees; and then, descending those

barren hills, Abner and his men cross the Jordan plain by night, and recross Jordan, 'and went through all Bithron.' The name means a cutting between mountains—a 'divided place.' Here, again, it is impossible to identify this pass, as all the country is broken and difficult. Abner returns to the sanctuary, Mahanaîm. 'Long war' between David and the house of Saul follows. David grows stronger, and then, through Abner's improper conduct with Rizpah, a quarrel follows, and Abner forsakes Ish-bosheth, and he further makes offers of peace and adherence to David, who, strange to say, is willing to make a league with him if he will bring back to David his first wife, Michal. More strange still, but showing how weak Ish-bosheth felt himself without Abner, Saul's son does take her away from the husband she had lived with all those long years, and brings her to Bahurim, now called 'Almit, a ruined village three and a half miles north-east of Jerusalem. The rough hill country between Olivet and 'Almit is little cultivated. It is a cruel deed all round, for this husband had loved her, and followed her weeping, until a significant hint from Abner sends him away. Eastern-like, he understands the unspoken threat.

Abner successfully wins over the tribes to David, and a feast follows. Joab was absent on a foray. On his return he hears of Abner's visit. He, indignant, remonstrates with the king, and then secretly sends messengers after the recent guest, who had reached the well of Sirah, now called 'Ain Sâreh, which is near Hebron. As usual with Easterns, a well was a halting-place. Abner returns to Hebron, and then Joab treacherously slew him. This murder was the usual blood revenge of Easterns, rife even to the present day. David was most indignant, and never forgave the deed, and to clear himself compels Joab and all his people to mourn for Abner with every usual sign of grief, and still more to do honour to the

dead, he himself follows the bier. We read, too, that David 'wept.' His courtiers followed suit; and it was well understood by all that David was innocent of his death. Furthermore, David complains to his servants that Joab had done contrary to his wish, and he wails for the 'prince' that had fallen. Surely, if David had felt so strongly, it was his duty to punish the wrong-doer.

Another murder then takes place, and the assassin thinks to win favour by taking the head of Ish-bosheth to David; but the murderers are slain, and then, with every mark of indignity, their bodies are hanged at the pool in Hebron. All the tribes come to David and ask him to be the king over the whole land. So he is anointed king.

David and his army now went up to attack the Jebusites. Jerusalem, on the lower hills, had long been in the hands of the Israelites, but Jebus, the upper city, had defied all capture. So sure are the inhabitants of this hill-fortress that their position is impregnable that they taunt David, and tell him that the lame and the blind of their people would be sufficient to keep him out of their city. The rock scarps still to be seen on Zion, which here rises sharp above the valley, enable us somewhat to understand their taunt. So short, so terse are the Bible statements, dismissing in a line what a 'special correspondent' would now require pages to describe, that it is only when careful exploration of the ground is made that we can at all understand the importance of that 'line.' To Sir Charles Warren we are indebted for one of the most valuable discoveries which throw light on how David took Jebus. I will quote the Rev. W. F. Birch: 'Ancient Jerusalem stood on a rocky plateau, enclosed on three sides by two ravines; that on the west and south was called the King's Dale, that on the east the Brook Kedron. The space thus enclosed was cleft by another ravine, called the Valley of Hinnom. On the narrow ridge running

between the "Brook" and the "Valley" stood, at the beginning of David's reign, the hitherto impregnable fortress of Jebus. On the west side of this ridge, in the "Valley," lay the rest of the city, once, at least, already captured by the Israelites, but occupied (perhaps, at times, in conjunction with them) by the Jebusites. On its east side, near the "Brook," was an intermittent fountain, called then En-rogel—once Gihon in the "Brook," for a time Siloah, but now called the Fountain of the Virgin.'

The founder of Jebus was a very subtle man. Water was a necessary of life. An ordinary wall of no great height was enough to baffle the most skilful general and the bravest army. Bethel on its low hill was more than a match for all the might of Ephraim. Late in David's reign even Hushai proposed to capture a fortified city by dragging it down by ropes, and Joab, more practised, would have found it difficult to raise a bank which could deal with the steep sides of Zion.

Some far-seeing Hittite or Amorite had designed from the inside of the city that a subterraneous passage should be cut through the rock to the spring below, so that in troublous times, when the daughters of Zion could no longer venture outside the gates to draw water from the fountain, the needful supply would be obtainable without the knowledge of the besiegers, and without risk to the besieged. For what enemy would attempt the all but impossible feat of diving along a water-course for seventy feet, and then climbing fifty feet up the smooth sides of a vertical rock-cut shaft?

Somehow David got to know how the Jebusites obtained their supply of water, and desperate as the attempt might seem, he issued a proclamation to his army that whoever first got up the 'Gutter,' that was the name of this subterraneous passage, and smote the Jebusites, 'he shall be chief and captain.' In 1 Chron. xi. 6 we see the result: 'So Joab the son of Zeruiah

went first up, and was chief.' How the deed was done sacred history tells not, but as we read how Sir Charles Warren and Sergeant Birtles went up this passage, we feel almost sure that Joab must have had some confederate amongst the Jebusites.

Joab was a skilful captain, and never lacked invention, and we see from his history how great was his craft. In this connection it is interesting to note that years after a Jebusite, Araunah, is in possession of valuable land just under Jebus. Why was he allowed to retain it? Josephus says 'he was a wealthy man among the Jebusites, but was not slain by David in the siege of Jerusalem because of the goodwill he bore to the Hebrews, and a particular benignity and affection which he had to the king himself.'

All this seems to point to the idea that Araunah was the Jebusite who helped Joab, and so secured the goodwill of David. History repeats itself. In 1834 the Fellahîn actually got possession of Jerusalem for a time. They entered by the sewer from the south-east (near the dung gate), and thus got into the Armenian quarter, near David Street. The full details of Sir Charles Warren's adventurous exploit can be read in 'The Recovery of Jerusalem' (pp. 244-248). Jebus was afterwards called Zion; the word means 'sunny.' David called it the 'city of David,' 'and built round about Millo and inward.' 'Millo' was probably a tower, or 'filling'—*i.e.*, this new fortification completed the defences of Zion, on the slope of the Tyropæon Valley, just at the weak point of Jebus. And now from distant Tyre, Hiram the king sends presents to David—'cedar-trees, carpenters and masons'; and these strangers built a 'house' or palace for David. The Jews were never great builders, and this fact is so often lost sight of when travellers wonder at the scanty *Jewish* ruins in Palestine. This embassy proves to David that his kingdom is established; he, however, is pious enough not to take the honour to himself.

Most of the people lived in 16 feet down to A.D.

Still, we see that he falls into the common failing of all Eastern despots, and multiplies his wives, just as did the kings of the heathen. The old implacable enemy, the Philistines, hearing that the whilom fugitive is now king, come up to harry his country and occupy Rephaim ('the valley of giants'), so named by Joshua. This plain, south of Jerusalem and lying between it and Bethlehem, would, in the hands of an enemy, cut off David from his old home. Doubtless, too, they came as usual in harvest-time, in order to carry off the rich crops of this fertile plain, which even now is a great breadth of corn-land. They would get access to it by passes through the western hills. At Baal Perazim ('lord of breaches') David overthrew them. This place has not been identified, but it is called in Isa. xxviii. 21, '*Mount* Perazim,' so it would be some ancient high place for Baal-worship—now to have a new meaning, in that the Lord God had here 'burst forth' on the foes of Israel. That the defeat was severe we see by the fact that the enemy had brought their gods with them and 'left them.' David showed how little power their 'images' had by burning them. Anxious to recover their 'gods' and avenge their defeat, the stubborn enemy again come up—probably the next year—and occupy the same plain.* This time it would seem that their array was more formidable, for David, inspired, tries not a direct attack, but one in flank and rear. Where that wood of mulberry-trees was, that enabled him to outflank the enemy, we have now no means of knowing; but their defeat was

* On the plain of Rephaim, south-west of Jerusalem, are seven large stone heaps. The mounds are of loose stones. The accumulation of small stones is enormous. In one of these heaps quite lately a stone was found standing upright. It is 2 feet 6 inches wide, 13 inches thick, two holes in it; and an opening, which looks like a human mouth, 5 to 6 inches wide. Schick, who examined and measured it, considers that it belongs to a Canaanite altar of offerings. The seven heaps are like burial cairns. Can these be memorials of the defeat of the Philistines by David?

still more severe, for from 'Geba' to 'Gaza' is the country specified. This would show how great had been the Philistine inroad, for Geba ('the hill') was a town of Benjamin, *north* of Jerusalem, so they must have masked or out-flanked that city and occupied ground from the south of it to the north, cutting it off, in short, on all sides but the east. They had intended this as a crushing invasion. Failing, their defeat was all the more disastrous to them. They were rolled back, and David invades their land even to Gaza or Gezer ('cut off' or 'isolated'). This, one of the most ancient towns of Palestine, was in existence before the Israelites crossed the Jordan. Joshua classes it amongst the royal cities of Canaan. Discoveries of considerable importance have been made here by M. Clermont Ganneau. Suffice it for the moment to say that ruins of a large and ancient city occupy an extensive plateau on the summit of a Tell, the strategic importance of which must have been considerable. In the centre of the Tell were the ruins of the stronghold of the city. Wine-presses, tombs, and foundations of houses, cut out of rock, are in abundance, and near it are isolated smaller hills, with rock cuttings, which explain the Biblical phrase, 'the city and her daughters.' These isolated groups in some way formed a part of the city, and were called 'daughters.' The place is now called Abu Shusheh, and my late friend, M. Bergheim, bought the hill and built himself a house there, and cultivated the land. One day he was missing, and his dead body was found not far away, dreadfully mangled.

A glance at the map will show the extent of country recovered by David, from Geba north, in the hill country, near Jerusalem, to Gezer in the west, in the lowlands, or Shephelah. David did not attack this fortified town, which would seem to have sheltered the broken army of the invaders of Judea.

David now, with a select corps of 30,000 men, goes to bring

back in state the ark of the Lord, which all these long years had been at 'Baale of Judah,' another name for Kirjath Jearim.* With great rejoicings it was brought from 'Gibeah' (the hill), and at Nachon's threshing-floor—some high rocky eminence not identified—Uzzah, son of the man in whose house the ark has rested for twenty years, seems to have been afraid for the ark, because the oxen slipped on the smooth floor and shook the ark. He 'put forth his hand to the ark of God.' His punishment was death. The place was then called Perez Uzzah ('Uzzah's breaking')—it must have been near Obed Edom's house, which is supposed to have been near Jerusalem. Later on David brings the ark 'with gladness' to Jerusalem, and it is here that he dances before the ark. His first wife, Michal, sees him from a window—remember, her heart must have been sore at David's long neglect of her, his first love, and one who had suffered much for him—and she taunts or reproaches him for 'uncovering' himself. The words would mean that he had laid aside his upper garments, and had only kept on the white shirt; but the sting of her reproach would lie in those bitter words, 'the eyes of the handmaidens of his servants.' What she meant was a sneer at his wives of later date, while she, of royal blood, had been neglected. David, quick to see the hidden taunt, replies that of those 'maidservants' he shall be had in honour. He does not forgive Michal, and the concluding part of the verse is very significant.

* Kirjath Jearim, the site usually shown, is the village of Kuryet el 'Enab ('town of grapes'), now known as Abu Ghosh, a large village on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. In the fifth century this place was believed to be Kirjath Jearim, but we know of what little value identifications in that age are, *unless* they are supported by good evidence. 'Jearim' means 'thickets.' Now, 'Erma, proposed by the Survey, fulfils all requirements; the site is a tangled mass of foliage. The whole Bible narrative seems fully met if we regard 'Erma as the true site.

The next chapter tells of the germ of David's idea of building a temple to Jehovah. He is reminded that he was taken from 'following the sheep' to be king over Israel. Then follows a fervent prayer from the king. War again; on whose side commenced we are not told; but Metheg Ammah ('the bridle of Ammah') is taken from the Philistines. The name really means 'the bridle of the mother' (R.V., 'the bridle of the mother city'); that is, as we see from 1 Chron. xviii. 1, Gath and her daughter towns. We have already seen in Gezer how the 'city and her daughters' was an expression used to describe the central hold and the outlying villages. From the west frontier David now returns to the eastern, and Moab is utterly crushed, and 'all they of Edom' become servants of David; so also Hadarezer, King of Zobah. This Syrian king had possession of the country from Damascus to the country adjoining the Euphrates. A crushing defeat is suffered by Hadarezer; his chariots and horsemen are destroyed, except a hundred chariots; the Syrians come to the assistance of this king, only to suffer defeat. It would seem that David first delivered his heavy blow on the King of Zobah, and then turned and crushed the Syrian allies who were coming to his assistance, but had not been able to come up in time. Damascus is now the spoil of the victor, and gifts are brought to David; 'gold shields' are among the spoils, from Betah, called in the first book of Chronicles Tibhath, probably a city on the eastern slopes of Anti-Libanus. Much spoil of brass is got also from Berothai, which city is probably the modern Beyrût,* the great port on the Mediterranean, so called from Beeroth ('wells'). This city is called 'Chun' in 1 Chron. xviii. 8.

Now the King of Hamath seeks friendship, and sends an embassy of peace with presents of value, for he, too, had been

* This I know is much disputed.

an enemy of Hadarezer. His kingdom of Hamath would appear to have been at this time an independent one; its position made it the chief city of Upper Syria in the valley of the Orontes. Its modern name, Hamah, shows little change, and it is here that those inscribed stones, called 'Hamath' stones, were first noticed by Burckhardt in 1810, afterwards rediscovered by Sir Richard Burton and Tyrwhitt Drake, and of which squeezes were shown in London in 1872. They are now known to be 'Hittite'—traces of that great kingdom so long lost, and in which the keenest interest is now excited; for Egyptian records tell of the early wars of this people with that great empire, and 'Toi' would appear to have been the relic of that great Hittite empire, which we now see was as vast as Egypt or Assyria. David seems to have attracted to his standard many Hittite warriors, who were amongst his most trusty adherents.

The spoil of all the conquered nations is dedicated to God by David. On his return he seems to have met a raiding band of Syrians who had penetrated as far as the 'Valley of Salt.' They suffer defeat, and then Edom falls into his hands. Truly a marvellous campaign! His kingdom over Israel completely established, David now thinks of his first patron, Saul; and finding that his dearly-loved friend Jonathan had left one son, who was lame, sends for him. It strikes one as strange that David had so long neglected this duty. No explanation is given. So from distant Lodebar in Gilead, where Mephibosheth had found a refuge, he is brought. This place was near Mahanaim, which had been the seat of his uncle Ish-bosheth's seat of government. The man had been lame from childhood; for when he was but five years old the awful news had come of Saul's and Jonathan's death at Gilboa. His nurse had taken up the child, placed him on her shoulders, and hurried off. In her haste she let the boy fall. The poor cripple is brought

before David. We see how humble he is from his words: 'Behold thy servant!' 'And why shouldest thou look upon such a *dead dog* as I am?' David treats him kindly, and he 'eats bread' at the king's table, while his estate is managed by Ziba.

Remembering old kindness shown by the late King of Ammon, David sends an embassy to his son and successor. They are treated with suspicion and scorn. Their beards are shorn, one of the greatest insults to an Eastern; their dress is cut short, so as to expose their persons, and they are ashamed to come back. Jericho is to be their home 'till their beards are grown,' while David, exasperated by the insult, prepares for instant war. This childish conduct of Ammon brought on the destruction of their nation; and, alarmed at the consequences of their folly, they prepare for war, and hire mercenaries of Bethrehob, also men from Zoba, which shows that the spirit of that nation was unbroken in spite of their defeats; 1,000 men from Maacah, east of Jordan, on the skirts of Mount Hermon, west of the Lejjah, probably a petty kingdom allied to the Geshurites, and so related to the mother of Absalom—for her name was Maacah. From the smallness of the number of the contingent furnished, it would seem to have been merely a trifle, but full of hatred to David. Ishtob sends 12,000 men. This, Jephthah's old location south-east of the Sea of Galilee, was in the desert country east of Gilead. Its old name survives in Taiyibeh, which means 'goodly,' and includes the Mizpeh of Gilead, where Jacob and Laban met. Rude stone monuments exist, and it was probably the seat of Baal worship.

Joab and all the host of mighty men cross the Jordan, and the battle with the confederate enemy takes place at some place on the eastern side unmentioned. The Syrian allies are defeated, and the people of Ammon fly into their stronghold.

This campaign ends by Joab returning to Jerusalem. The Syrians renew the war. The persevering Hadarezer, undaunted by his successive defeats, draws Syrian forces from beyond 'the river'—the Euphrates. They assemble at Helam, an unknown site, between Jordan and Euphrates, thought to be Alamatha, a town named by Ptolemy on the west of the Euphrates, near Nicephorium. David now takes the field. The huge force of Syrian chariots are of no avail; they are utterly defeated, their commander-in-chief slain. This mention of chariots would show that this battle took place on some level ground. The result of the victory is that Hadarezer is forsaken by his allies, who hasten to make peace with the victorious Israelites, and Ammon gets no help from Syria any more.

It would seem that there were certain times of the year when battles were fought, for it is said 'at the time when kings go out to battle.' These Eastern armies were really a militia—a levy *en masse* of the men, and with rude commissariat arrangements, and therefore unable to take the field for long periods. We note the same yearly expeditions of the kings of Egypt, Assyria, or Babylon. So now Joab is sent to attack Ammon, and they besiege the capital city, Rabbath. This was Ammon's chief city. There, ruins still exist, for afterwards a fine Roman city was erected on the site. At the time of David it would appear as if the Ammonites lived a sort of Bedawîn life in the wide plains east of Gilead. The position is very strong; the country around is bare and waterless. The town, however, lies in a ravine, with steep cliffs on either side, and a stream running through; hence Joab's expression, 'the city of waters.' This stream is the source of the Jabbok, a river which sweeps far out into the desert, then doubles back upon itself, and forces its way through a great mountain. The valley is seventy or more miles in length, and is exceedingly

fertile, which enables us to understand the power of this race of Ammon, who so long defied David. Its capacities are great, and old canals exist which some day will again make this a most fertile land. Some of the old canals show most wonderful engineering skill; they lead under ledges, around cliffs, and show that most skilful designers and workmen planned and executed them. From the northern plateau a spur runs out, presenting a strong site; for it is divided by a broad cutting from the land on the side. This suburb was what Joab first took—that is, the lower town, in which lies the source of the river.

The history of David while Joab was at Rabbath is a miserable one. Lapped in luxury, he falls into grievous sin, adds murder to that sin, and makes Joab a partner in his crime. The only bright spot in the whole history is that of the brave Hittite, a stranger—no Jew, remember—who, because the ark and the soldiers are in the open field, refuses to take comfort in his home, and by the same fact does not fall into the trap set for him by the king. This, again, is a proof of the truth of Scripture; it does tell the faults, the crimes of the best men. Find any courtly history of Egypt or Assyria where the scribes had dared or cared to notice such doings of *their* kings. David is an Eastern despot. Yes, but his foul deeds are reproved. He is punished, and he repents, and, thanks be to God, the sinner that repenteth is in no wise cast out, though he sin even the 'seventy times seven.'

David conquers Rabbah. Without doubt his conduct does seem most cruel and bloodthirsty. The age was barbarous. His deeds show it. Punishment for sin comes even at the height of his prosperity, for again sin breaks out in his own household. When the ruler, the father, sets his children a bad example, who shall wonder at poor human nature in the younger man following suit? Absalom here shows righteous

indignation, and David is most weak. He does nothing; he is 'only wrath'!

Two years after, Absolom holds feast at his sheep farm at Baal-hazor. The name still exists in Tell 'Asûr, near Taiyibeh, in Ephraim. Absalom wishes the king to be present. He declines, but Absalom is very pressing that Amnon should go. Secret instructions had been given to slay him, and these instructions are carried out. We see here how bad news is magnified. First David hears that 'all' the king's sons are dead, and later on that it is Amnon alone. Absalom fled to Talmai, King of Geshur. The word 'Geshur' means bridge; it was a part of Argob, or North-East Bashan. Talmai would be grandfather to Absalom, because David's wife Maacah was a Geshurite. So we readily see why Absalom fled there, to be with his mother's kinsfolk; and they sheltered him three years. David longs for his handsome son, and Joab adopts a truly Eastern way of bringing father and son together again. He sent to Tekoa—now called Tekû'a—a ruined site, showing many Hebrew traces. It is on a high ridge, about six miles from Bethlehem, and is the centre of a pastoral region, and probably was never a walled town. It is close to 'Herod's Mountain,' the Beth-Haccerem of Jeremiah. The 'wise' woman tells her story, and the result is Joab is sent to fetch Absalom. Here again David takes refuge in half-measures. When brought to Jerusalem, David refuses to see Absalom, who for two full years resides in the capital city, and yet sees not his father's face. His beauty is commented on. He has three sons and one daughter, who in appearance resembles her ill-fated aunt. Absalom orders Joab's fields of barley to be fired, and he, quick to see what the meaning of this is, goes to Absalom, who naturally asks why he is not allowed to see his father; it were better, he says, for him to have stayed in Geshur. And very pertinently he adds: 'If I have done

iniquity, let him slay me.' Joab tells the king, who receives his son, kisses him, and restores him to favour. Then follows the pretentious conduct of Absalom and his successful attempt to win the hearts of the people. And now comes a difficulty. The text says after forty years (2 Sam. xv. 7)—some authorities say 'four years,' which is most likely—Absalom thinking his intrigues are ripe, pretends to wish to go to Hebron. Two hundred men go with him; they go in good faith, and are ignorant of his devices. Spies are sent to warn the people when the rebellion is to take place, and one of David's counsellors—a most trusted friend, Ahithophel, the Gilonite—is sent for. His native place, Giloh, is probably the ruin Jâla in the Hebron mountains, three miles north of Hŭlhûl, in Judah. The conspiracy grows apace, so much so that David says to the few who remain faithful: 'Let us flee.' This they do, only ten women being left to look after the palace. The fugitives tarry in Beth-merhak ('the far house'), not identified, but somewhere near Jerusalem. The faithful band of six hundred tried warriors who had followed David's fortunes from Gath still cling to the fallen king, and we get a most touching story of one Ittai, the Gittite. This Philistine of Gath, with unflinching loyalty, elects to follow the fortunes still of his old leader; it is a great proof of the love inspired by David in those with whom he was brought into personal contact. It is remarkable that David should say, 'Return and abide with the king'—for you, a stranger and an exile from your own land, had better make your peace with the new ruler. But, no; all the men and their little ones pass over—over the brook Kedron (now no longer a 'brook,' for its bed is filled up with débris); and they go the 'way of the wilderness.' The ark is also brought by the priests, but is sent back; and here the tact and foresight of the old warrior is seen. He wishes to have faithful friends at the new court—friends who will keep him informed of passing events.

David proposes to stay at the 'fords,' or, as other readings have it, in the 'plains' of the wilderness, where he (David) will await their news. Up the Mount of Olives David, 'weeping,' and with every sign of woe, passes on, probably taking the central of the three pathways which climb the mount—a path deep worn in the rocky limestone, and which leads directly over the summit of what is now called Jebel et Tôr. The range of Olivet is really four hills; the ridge runs north and south, bending at one extremity towards the west, and the other to the east. The summit of Et Tôr is separated from the northern crest of Scopus by a depression, and it is in this depression that the road runs. There was an old sanctuary on the summit, and we read that David worshipped there. From that summit 'the way of the wilderness' leads north-east, and very soon you are entangled in the passes and barren mountains of Judea, now, as then, desolate, bare, and lifeless; hills which the wind, driving from north or east, has rendered bare and stony, with occasional patches of vegetation in the hollows or when near springs. Here, so close to Jerusalem, it is easy to find a desert as secluded and lonely as in Sinai. Hushai, 'the Archite,' a friend or privy councillor of David's, now meets the old king; he comes with torn garments and dusty head, but he is advised to go back and pretend to be an adherent of Absalom. It is impossible to defend this double-faced advice. Ziba then meets David with bread, fruits, and a skin of wine. Ziba does all this so that he may steal the patrimony of poor Mephibosheth, whom he falsely accuses o plotting against David. It says little for David's judgment that he so readily believed a story against a son of his old friend Jonathan. With a word, he gives away the property of the poor cripple, and passes on his way, to be cursed by Shimei, who was an adherent of Saul's house. From the high ground above the road he cursed and threw stones, acting just

as might now be experienced by any stranger passing through this same village, the inhabitants of which do not bear a good reputation; at all events, they well resemble Shimei in their bad language and their casting of stones and dust. Though so near Jerusalem, the natives seem of a different type, and not at all fond of strangers.

Hushai goes to Absalom, who expresses his surprise. The cool way in which this usurping son speaks of his father as 'thy friend'—'Why wentest thou not with thy friend?'—shows what a bad heart Absalom had. He gets a deceitful answer. It is a conflict of wits and untruthfulness, and the older man gains. He has not lived for years in an Oriental court not to be a master in the art of lying. Absalom follows the foul advice of Ahithophel, who wishes to place a barrier for ever between father and son, and so adopts a mode of insult which only a depraved and an Eastern mind would think of. Ahithophel in other respects gives Absalom wise advice, but it is overruled, and Hushai, with his crafty tongue, prevails. David is kept fully informed, and crosses the Jordan fords. The investigations of the Palestine Fund prove that the river has many fords, so it is not necessary to attempt to identify which one they crossed by. Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel ('the fuller's spring'). This well was at one time supposed to be the Bîr Eyûb, or Job's Well, a little way down the Kedron Valley, and south of Siloam; but it has been proved to be the spring called by the natives 'the mother of steps,' and by the Christians the Virgin's Well. This intermittent spring is fed by a subterranean aqueduct. The water flows at uncertain intervals—two or three times a day, in summer; then only once in two or three days. A channel discovered near had caves in it, in which were found cooking-dishes, water-pots, lamps, and a small amount of charcoal. It is, therefore, easy to see how these two spies could remain so

close to Jerusalem and yet not be discovered. A maid-servant is the go-between. Here this shows Eastern customs. This woman could go to the spring for water without any suspicion being attached to her, and she could tell the men in hiding the news. A small boy, however, had seen them, and told Absalom. Boys still prowl about these Eastern wells, and it was owing to a boy that close here, not long ago, one of the most interesting discoveries was made. The spies quickly escape to Bahurim, identified as 'Almît, three and half miles north-east of Jerusalem. At this ruin are several remarkable rock-cut cisterns. In a courtyard is a well. The text says the spies went down a well, and woman's wit covers the well-mouth, and she spreads bruised corn over it, as if it were solid ground and the corn had there been crushed. She gives a truly Eastern reply to Absalom's messengers—a reply which conceals the truth, implies a falsehood, and yet the sort of enigmatical answer that to this day Easterns delight in. It seems impossible for them to give a straightforward answer; evasion is common from their birth. Ask a man if he is going home, he will answer: 'Why? Does my lord require anything?' 'No; but are you going home?' 'I will take a message to the sheikh of my village—he is in the bazaar to-day.' 'I have no message for thy sheikh; but art thou going home?' 'Wherever my lord sends me I will go;' and so on, but never a direct answer. Ask a man where he comes from, and the answer will probably be 'From behind'; 'Where goest thou?' 'To the gate of God,' or, 'Where God pleases';* and as it was in the days of David so it is now. Ahithophel is wise enough to see that Hushai's crafty advice is fatal to Absalom, so, putting his affairs in order, he ends his life. Hushai had skilfully flattered the vain mind of Absalom by suggesting that all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, would

* Mrs. Finn, 'Quarterly Statement,' April, 1879, pp. 82-87.

follow him, whereas he well knew that the success of the conspiracy was due to its suddenness, and that all David wanted was *time*. To the old sanctuary, Mahanaim, goes David. Absalom follows with his army, Amasa being commander-in-chief. This son of an Ishmaelite father would seem to have been an *illegitimate* son of David's sister. This is the first mention of his name. To Mahanaim various old enemies of David now come to bring him, in his adversity, presents of much-needed food. Under his tried captains, Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, the soldiers are placed, for the people will not consent that the old king should expose his life. The battle takes place in the 'forest of Ephraim.' The word 'wood' does not mean a forest, but a broken region, uneven, rocky, with, perhaps, large bushes in it. There certainly was one tree—a great oak or terebinth.

Josephus says the two armies were drawn up for battle in 'the great plain.' In our own country we have an example of the use of the word 'forest' which does not mean trees at all, but rough mountain ground. What is more common than to hear of a Scotch deer *forest?* and yet every sportsman knows there may be no trees at all. The Hebrew word is often, it seems to me, used in the same sense. Dr. Selah Merrill makes, I think, the most satisfactory attempt to identify both Mahanaim and the site of this battle, so fatal to Absalom. He suggests that the account given of the two messengers sent to David gives a clue to the ground. Ahimaaz wishes to run. Joab declines to trust him, but selects a stranger, a Cushite, to run, but afterwards allows Ahimaaz to go, but says he will get no reward, implying that he cannot possibly come in first; but we are told Ahimaaz went 'by the way of the plain.' Doubtless he was familiar with the country, and took the easiest route, while the stranger might take the *direct* line, and yet, having to cross wâdies and broken ground, his

speed would be impeded. Most travellers have suggested Mahneh, fourteen miles south-east of Bethshan. These ruins cover about a fourth of a mile in extent, but do not indicate any great age or importance, but no one could 'run by way of the plain' to reach it. There is no room in Wâdy Mahneh for troops to manœuvre by 'thousands,' and the distance at which the runners were discovered by the watchman is not applicable to Mahneh.* There does not exist for many miles in any direction from Mahneh a region corresponding to a field or a great plain; but six miles north of the Zerka, Wâdy 'Ajlûn is found. It has three names. There is a large ruin called Fakaris at the mouth of the wâdy. Here is an important valley, abundance of water, and the ruins of an important city. Three miles further north, passing about midway a smaller ruin, mostly buried, Wâdy Suleikhat is reached; this wâdy bears the name of El Kirbeh in its upper course. Here water is abundant, and at the mouth of the wâdy are the ruins of a large city lying on both sides of the stream. This is by far the largest ruin in the Jordan Valley east of the river. Khurbet Suleikhat is some three hundred feet above the plain, and among the foothills in such a way that it overlooks the valley, while the road running north and south along the valley passes nearly a mile to the west of it. The surrounding country is most fertile, and hence we should naturally expect that the principal city of the valley would be placed here. A watchman from a tower could see to the north a considerable distance, also clear across the valley to the west, and down the valley to the south, a long stretch, nearly or quite to the point where the Zerka and Jordan unite at the foot of Kŭrn Sŭrtŭbeh. In addition to these facts, if we consider that the town *is double* (Mahanaim means 'two hosts' or '*two camps*'), that these ruins lie on two sides of a stream, their

* See 'East of the Jordan,' Merrill, pp. 434-439.

size, the abundance of good water, the fertile region about it, it would seem that here the principal city of East Jordan of David's time probably stood. Ahimaaz outran Cushi, but when asked the news evaded the question as to the safety of Absalom, pleading that he had only seen a 'great tumult.' The second messenger was more truthful, or probably ignorant, being a stranger, of the great love David bore his rebellious son, and so told in roundabout way that Absalom was slain. The father's heart is broken; victory is counted as naught; only the thought of his handsome and loved boy fills his heart, and he breaks out into the touching wail, 'Would God *I* had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'

Joab soundly reproaches the king. The people, terror-stricken, steal away. Joab points out that they had at the risk of their own lives saved the king, and that unless he shows some gratitude affairs will be still worse. So David arose and 'sat in the gate,' and then the people passed before him. Israel acknowledged their defeat, but the elders of Judah appear to have held back. A message is sent to Amasa, the defeated captain of Absalom's host. He is reminded of his relationship to David when he offers to make him commander-in-chief instead of Joab. All this shows how indignant David was with his old chief. We then are told that Judah comes to Gilgal, the old camp, and that many come to meet David, who goes over in a ferry-boat.

We are told the people crossed by a 'ferry-boat.' A ferry-boat still crosses the Jordan ford near Jericho; this boat usually takes passengers first, and then returns for their baggage and animals. It is quite common for Russian pilgrims to cross this way in batches, and then return, that they may be able to say they had crossed the sacred river and stood on its eastern bank. And at the Damieh ford there is a good ferry and a

veritable 'bethabara,' a house belonging to the ford—a khan, in short, where travellers can rest.

Though Absalom is slain by Joab, the people are spared; the dead body is cast into 'the great pit,' marking some well-known pit or cistern* in this wild region. A heap of stones is formed over it, such as from earliest times seems to have been so raised over a dead warrior. It is done even now amongst the Bedawîn, and Absalom was half a Bedawy. We are told that Absalom had reared a 'pillar' in the king's dale to keep his name in remembrance. From this it follows that his three sons had died in his lifetime. At the time this Book of Samuel was written, this monument was standing; but it could not be that monument now called Absalom's, in the Kedron Valley. That half-Doric, half-Egyptian erection cannot date back later than the days of Hadrian, though it is strange to see Jews who pass it spit and cast stones at the heap which lies by the side of the building. The heap is large, the accumulation of ages. Never have I seen a Jew pass this place without noticing both actions.

Shimei makes excuses, and is spared. Mephibosheth explains how by the duplicity of his servant he had been prevented attending David, and is dismissed with the curt remark that it is unnecessary to further discuss the matter, and the decree that he and Ziba shall divide the land. David does not show well in this matter, and the conduct of Jonathan's son has more of nobility than has the king's.

Barzillai, an old man, is entreated to come to court, but excuses himself on account of his age; and his son or servant, Chimham, is chosen in his stead. A wrangle then takes place with the tribes as to who has the most right to David. Their gratitude might perhaps be spoken of 'as a lively sense of *favours to come*.' Israel, however, at the call of Sheba, forsake

* Probably an old cistern.

David, and Judah alone remains faithful; so David now has to face another revolt, which in his opinion is more dangerous than that of Absalom. Amasa is sent to gather the forces of Judah; three days are given him. Either he likes not the office, or the militia decline to follow this new leader; it does, however, seem strange that the commander-in-chief of the rebel forces should, after his defeat, be chosen as the commander of the king's forces. David's anger at Joab, and also the will of a despot, is all the reason given. David chafes at the delay, and then sends Abishai, and with him go the picked *corps d'élite* of Joab's old warriors. Joab dissembles his anger at his dismissal, but in a cowardly and treacherous manner murders Amasa, and then follows up the rebel, Sheba, who is pursued through all the tribes, till far north, at Abel-Bethmaachah, he finds refuge. This strong place Joab attempts to take. The site is now represented by 'Abl,' a village six and a half miles west of Banias. It is a small village on a knoll, and quite close to the frontier, and would naturally be made as strong as possible, for it would get the first brunt of any invasion from that side; and we shall afterwards find that it suffered much in later times from invasions from Syria and Assyria. Seven miles north of 'Abl' are remains of a strong city. On a rounded hill the ruins lie thickly. This Abel was called a 'mother city,' in that it had many inhabitants. There is an oblong knoll of rock, and on this a high mound was raised large enough for a city. With a deep trench and wall, and well watered, it would be almost impregnable. The river Derdâra falls from the plain above in a series of cataracts. The wise woman from the wall calls to Joab, and the matter is ended by the head of Sheba being thrown from the wall. The army is then dispersed, and they go every man to his tent, proving again, if proof were needed, that the whole force was a militia, or an irregular force, as we should now term it. Joab returns to Jerusalem to the

king. It shows a very remarkable state of things that he does not appear to have been reproached for the murder of Amasa. A famine in the land follows, and David is told it is because of Saul, and his breaking the bond by which the Gibeonites were long ago assured of safety, though they had deceived Joshua. David then consults the remnant of the Gibeonites, and they demand a blood revenge, and seven of Saul's sons are delivered up. Mephibosheth is spared, but the five sons of Michal are delivered, with two others. It seems that these five were *adopted* sons of Michal. They were really sons of her sister Merab; and Michal being named would seem to be an error of the copyist. Merab had once been promised to David, but was given by her father to Adriel, the Meholathite. These seven men were crucified 'in the mountain'; and then follows the terribly sad story of Rizpah—how from the beginning of harvest till the spring rains the bereaved mother watched the dead bodies, and kept the vultures and wild beasts from mutilating the poor corpses. No wonder the heart of the king is touched, and he now thinks of the dead bodies of Saul and Jonathan, gathers them, and, with the bones of the seven sufferers from this cruel vengeance, gives decent burial to the remains. It is a bloodthirsty story. Zelah, the burial-place named, is not known.

Again the Philistines made war, and somewhere in the low country David goes out to meet them. The old warrior waxes faint, and is in danger from one of the Philistine giants; but Abishai saves David and kills his assailant, and the people now protest that they will not allow the king any more to go out to battle, lest he 'quench the lamp of Israel.'

'Gob' is the scene of another battle. This place is called 'Gezer' in Chronicles, and in the Syriac version 'Gath.' The word means 'a pit.' Here a brother of Goliath of Gath defied Israel, but is slain by Jonathan the son of Shimei, or Shammah,

as it is in the First Book of Samuel, and Shimea in the First Book of Chronicles.

We then have David's song of deliverance, and the names and deeds of the mighty men. One Philistine raid is mentioned, when they came to harry a crop of lentils—that favourite bean of all Easterns from earliest times till now; then the three mighty men burst through the opposing host, and drew water from the Bethlehem well. These wells are thought to be those that still exist on the northern side of the village, and are three in number. We know how David refuses to drink this water, and pours it out before the Lord. Even to this day Easterns value water from the spring which as children they drank, and they still profess to be able to tell where water comes from, when offered a drink from the skins of a traveller. In my own experience I have known men go long distances only to take water from the beloved wells. Egyptians will do the same to taste the water of the Nile, and if an Egyptian war-vessel comes to England the captain is sure to have for his own consumption some Nile water in sealed vessels. A native Egyptian I brought to England once entreated me to allow him to go to Gravesend, because an Egyptian war-ship had anchored there. He wished to go that he might beg a taste of the beloved water. He went and drank, and came back perfectly happy. Such is the abiding custom of the East—unchangeable in every respect.

David, puffed up by vanity, orders Joab to organize a census. The old captain protests in vain, and then goes off on his mission, which lasts nine months and twenty days. The extent of the kingdom can be seen from the places enumerated. Over Jordan goes Joab and the officers to Aroer, 'Ar'air, now a desolate heap, the ruins of which are featureless—a few arches, some wells and cisterns, situated in Wâdy Môjib, or Arnon, which takes this name a mile or two above the ruins. Three

wâdies here meet; each has a running stream. Gad is next mentioned. This was the centre of the land east of Jordan. The land is high, well suitable for flocks; the people lived principally in tents; their territory extended eastward to Aroer. There is water in abundance, and therefore the vegetation is rich; fish abound in the streams; the country is lovely.

Jazer is another centre for these officers of the census. Now the whole country abounds with ruins; the land is very rich, well fitted for agriculture; nothing in Judea can compare to the fertility of this region. The country is slightly rolling plains, the land free of stones; even now rich fields of barley and wheat show what the land is capable of producing. The western portion of this high plateau is well wooded; oaks grow of good size. There are two small lakes; the height of the plateau is about 3,400 feet above sea-level. The lower hills are especially well wooded. At the present it is a favourite haunt of the Bedawîn, and their black tents and flocks can be seen all over the country.

Gilead is spoken of. Now, this word is used in the Bible both as the name of a district and the name of a city. In Hosea vi. 8 we read, 'Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity, polluted with blood.' As a district, it is most fertile, and has in it ruins of magnificent size, showing that the old towns were rich, and of great importance. The 'city' called Gilead was accessible by a good road starting from Samaria, and that it was in good order we see from the mention of chariots going to and fro. The land of Tahtim Hodshi* ('the land of the newly inhabited') is an unknown, undiscovered site. Danjaan—here the Septuagint and Vulgate read 'Dan in the woods' The ruin Dânian, four miles north of Achzib, between Tyre and Akka, is suggested by the Survey party, but it may have been the well-known Dan, now called Tell el Kâdy.

* Now thought to be 'the land of the Hittites.'

Zidon and the sea-board and on to the great city Tyre; then to the cities of the Hivites, 'midlanders' or 'villagers,' whose homes were about Hermon and Lebanon. The Septuagint and Jerome identify these people with the Avims of Deut. ii. 23. They were a nomad people.

Then, swinging round, the officers go through the lowlands, through Canaan, and so on to the south of Judea to Beer-sheba, the extreme southern border towards Egypt. Punishment follows, and then Gad, the prophet or seer, tells David to erect an altar on the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. How is it we find a Jebusite in possession of so valuable a plot of ground close to his old city? Can we not read between the lines, and see that probably Araunah was *the* Jebusite who betrayed to Joab the secret of 'the Gutter,' and therefore was held in honour, and had possessions given him? The threshing-floor is bought, the price is paid, and the altar erected. The history of David is not yet finished, but we have seen enough to know that, like every man, he had two sides. The Bible relates facts; it does not conceal the faults, the sins, or crimes of the greatest of its heroes. Read this one side of David: he appears *when* king to be little better than those kings of the heathen by whom he is surrounded. He is despotic, ungrateful, cruel, unforgiving. Read the other side of his character in his prayers, and in the Psalms, and we see how honestly the man struggled against his natural infirmities; how conscious he was of his imperfections; how he trusted *not* in his own righteousness, but in the love and goodness of Jehovah. Not that he did not sin, and that often, but when brought face to face with God, *then* he always acknowledged his sin, repented, and forsook his evil way. Bad men do not do this. They sin, too, but refuse to repent, and refuse to surrender their will to God's will.

There is no personal history in the Old Testament related

with such fulness as that of David. There is no one with whose struggles and life, from that of shepherd boy to king, we are so well acquainted. We seem to know him, to enter into his feelings—rejoicing in his escapes from Saul, wondering at his career as a king, and regretfully pondering over his many falls. He was 'thorough' in all he did; he put his heart into his work, and, like many great characters since, he had a belief in himself. No failure daunted him; no difficulties deterred him. We see the same in Napoleon, Wellington, Grant, Lincoln, and a host of others. That he knew he had a Divine mission is clear. The man in his better moments rose to the occasion, and had dreams of the highest; then he found that life was real. He thought not of himself, of his own self-advancement, but of God and His work. Then indeed was he the man 'after God's own heart.' That he did not always keep that high standpoint is patent enough to the most casual reader.

Dependence upon God was his very life. 'Thy servant kept his father's sheep.' What enabled him? 'The Lord delivered them into my hand. . . .' Then witness his first great conflict with the human enemy—Goliath the Philistine—the one, in armour of brass; the other, ruddy, and his warlike implement a sling. The one a believer in the things that are seen, and the other a believer in the invisible presence and power. To which comes the victory? And yet how dull, how slow are men to see this! 'Not by thy might, O man!' is the lesson running through the ages, and yet man learns it not. And then take David as an outlaw. Many of his acts are strange, doubtful, not to be excused or defended in settled society. Yet the Bible tells these of him. Are we to blink them? No; this man links himself more with us tried men of the nineteenth century, because of his failings, his sins, than those smirk people who have never sinned—because, forsooth, they have

not perchance been tried—of whom it might be said as did Burns in his bitter song: 'Ye're ablins nae temptation!' This great character—full of rashness, full of life—was unlike so much of this religious decorum, this boneless modern Christianity, which never can be excited either by the flesh or by personal desire to right the wrongs of others, but is content to macerate its flesh and 'save its own soul'! No; to David—hot-tempered David — the poor did turn, the weary, the oppressed; and they found in the leader of that freebooting band a refuge at Adullam, and as the days went on present deliverance, and full deliverance thereafter, both from foes outward and foes inward.

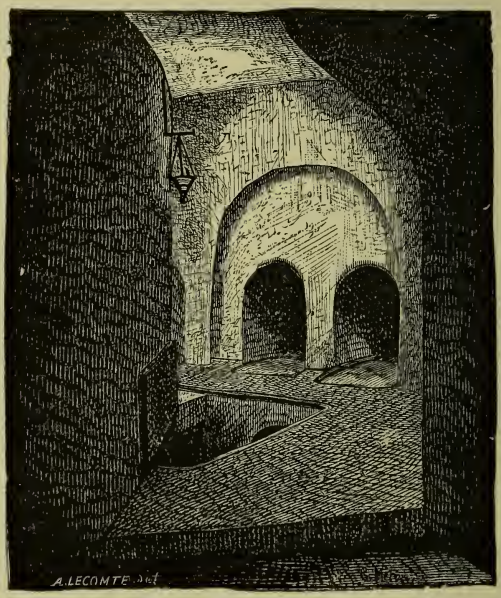
CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS.

The closing days of David's life are now related. The senile warrior suffers from cold, and an attendant or wife is obtained for him in the person of Abishag. Then Adonijah, David's eldest son, about thirty-five years of age, born at Hebron, good-looking, as was Absalom—a spoilt son—who in all his life had never known correction, or been thwarted in any way, plots to take the throne. In one sense he might think, being oldest, that he was the rightful heir. He must, however, have known that Solomon had been chosen by God to be the successor to David. This is clear from 1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10. He prepares chariots and fifty men to 'run before him.' 'Syces' were only allowed for princes, and the number of these 'forerunners' showed he claimed the throne. He prepares a feast 'by the stone Zoheleth,' 'which is beside En-rogel.' This has been most satisfactorily identified by M. Clermont Ganneau, for the present Arab name Zahweilah, a cliff on which the village of Silwân or Siloam stands, has almost identical meaning and form. In this village exists a rocky plateau surrounded by Arab buildings, which mark its true form and extent. The western face, cut perpendicularly, slightly overhangs the valley. Steps rudely cut in the rock enable one to climb it. By this road, dangerous as it really is, the women of Siloam come to fill their water jars at the so-called Virgin's Fount. This rock

and passage and ledge of rock are called Zahweilah. The identity of the Arabic and Hebrew words is complete. The valley is called by the Fellahîn Pharaoh's Valley, meaning the 'valley of the king.' It is called 'the king's garden' or 'king's dale' in the Bible. The word Zoheleth means 'slippery,' and no truer word could be found to describe this rocky ledge, on which the writer often slipped when trying to ascend Siloam. The king is told of this feast both by Bathsheba and Nathan, and he orders that Solomon, accompanied by the king's body-guard of mighty men, and riding on the royal mule, is to be taken to Gihon. This word means 'the spring-head,' and comes from a root meaning 'to burst forth.' Josephus calls it 'the fountain,' outside the city. So when the trumpet blew to announce that Solomon was king, he would be in full view of Adonijah and his supporters, and probably only one hundred yards distant. Adonijah's guests disappear and seek their own safety, while he flies to the altar. At this time there would be but one, and that on Araunah's old threshing-floor. His life is promised, and he is 'brought down from the altar,' an expression in itself which shows that from the hill of Moriah the fugitive was brought *down* to the king's dale. He is ordered to go to his house. And now comes the closing chapter of David's life. It is painful to read his last messages to Solomon. If Joab and Shimei were such criminals, surely he ought to have been the one to punish them; to advise Solomon to, as it were, lay traps for them, is painful to read. David is buried in 'the city of David.' Where, then, is his tomb? Neh. iii. 15, 16, points out that it was between the Pool of Siloam and the lower Pool of Gihon—inside the city wall. Now, the traditional site is one on the southern brow of Mount Zion, where stands a mosque which has not been examined for centuries, and which all Moslems revere as a holy place, considering it the true site of David's tomb.

The site of David's tomb was known in the days of the Apostles (see Acts ii. 29). Josephus, however, tells us it had been rifled by Hyrcanus, and later on by Herod, seeking treasure which had been supposed to be there buried. In the third century after Christ the site was lost. Sir Charles Warren thinks that the tomb of David was outside the north wall of Jerusalem, not far from the so-called Cotton Grotto, from



TOMB OF NICODEMUS.

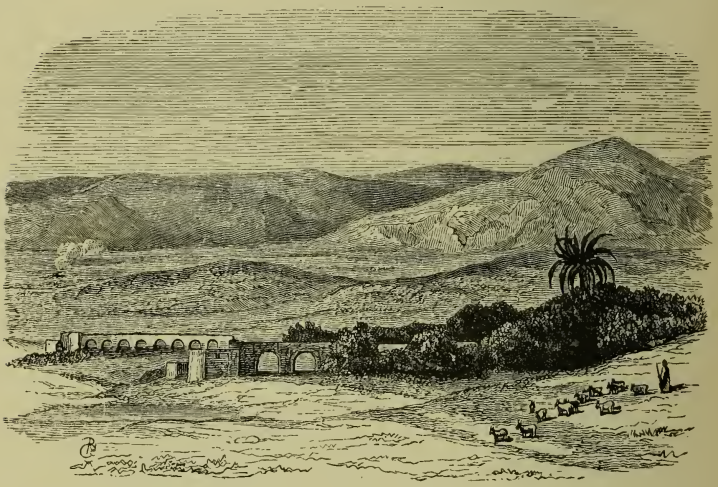
which the stones for the Temple were quarried. Major Conder, again, thinks that the tombs of the kings of Israel and Judah still exist, and are those shown to travellers inside the present Church of the Sepulchre, known to travellers as the 'tomb of Nicodemus.' He points out that this is a very ancient tomb, which also would hold at least twelve bodies. Dr. Thomson thinks the mosque covers the true site. From

all this it will be see that nothing but excavations can settle the point. It may be that as the tombs of Rameses and Seti have been found, some day this royal tomb may also be brought to light.

Adonijah now makes a request to Bathsheba. He professes peace—says he is resigned to the fact that her son is king. He lays a trap, and the queen falls into it, and goes as an advocate for him to her son Solomon. Had his request been granted, by all precedent of Eastern law, it would have been an acknowledgment that Adonijah was rightful heir to the throne; for Eastern kings marry the wives of their predecessors. Solomon sees through the scheme, and orders Benaiah to execute Adonijah, while the old priest, Abiathar, who had been such a life-long friend of David, is ordered to his home at Anathoth, now 'Anâta, three miles north of Jerusalem, a small half-ruined hamlet on a broad ridge, with fields of grain, figs, and olives. Remains of walls and quarries here now supply stone for buildings in Jerusalem. It was famous as the birthplace of Jeremiah, for it was in old times a city of the priests, and is mentioned in the catalogue of priests' cities. One fine old reservoir still exists here, and the stones and shattered columns show it was once a place of greater importance than now. It is called 'O poor Anathoth!' by Isaiah x. 30, when the Assyrian invasion under Sennacherib took place.

Joab, the old warrior, had turned after Adonijah. Now, hearing the news, he flies to the 'tent of the Lord.' Here it is proved that up to this time the ark rested in a tent, called a tabernacle. This altar must again have been the one on Mount Moriah. The king orders his death, but Benaiah hesitates to slay his old chief, especially in such a sacred place, and goes back for fresh instructions, and accordingly Joab is slain, and the executioner is given the vacant post. Some think that this altar to which Joab fled was that of Gibeon—his

place of burial was his own house in the wilderness. Shimei is warned he is to be resident (hostage) in Jerusalem, and never to leave it. Two slaves run away to Gath. He goes to recover them on an ass—no warlike procession—regains his slaves, and then Solomon, quick to find occasion, orders his death. Here we have the 'one man' power, and used in a truly arbitrary and Eastern despotic manner. Though Solomon believed in Jehovah, yet he and his people sacrificed and burnt incense in



VIEWS FROM JENÎN, LOOKING NORTH ACROSS THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.

'high places,' *i.e.*, to the gods of the heathen. To Gibeon—now El Jîb—the king goes to sacrifice, and then a dream occurs, and the good heart of Solomon shows itself. He is assured of great blessings. Returning to Jerusalem, he gives a feast. Then follows his acute judgment between the two women, and afterwards we have a list of his commissariat officers and their posts. Makaz is not known. Shaalbim, probably the present village of Selbît, south east of Lydda. Bethshemesh, now 'Ain Shems, in the Valley of Sorek, a border city, the Arabic name

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Frederick C. Manvel, 37 Willow Street, Clerk.

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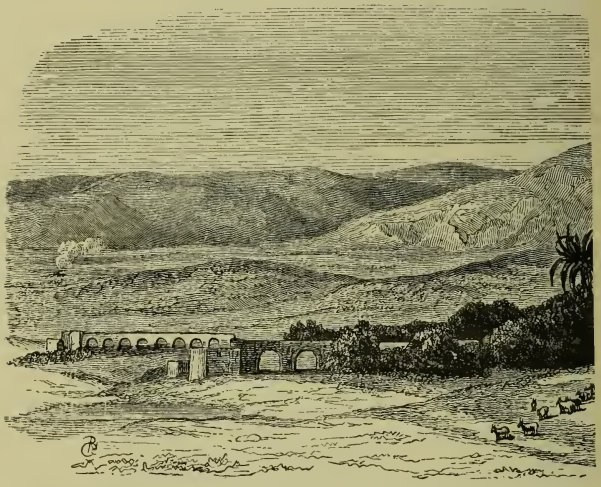
(7) Prayer.

be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting. O Lord, save Th people, and bless Thine heritage; govern them and lift them up forever Day by day we magnify Thee, and we worship Thy name ever world with out end. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin. O Lord have mercy upon us. O Lord, let Thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trus is in Thee. O Lord, in Thee have I trusted! Let me never be confounded.



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having exactly the same meaning as the Hebrew. Elon-beth-hanan, probably Beit Anan, eight and a half miles from Jerusalem, on the old road—a small village on the top of a flat ridge, near a main road; ruins of a khan; some good water and a spring near. Aruboth, not identified, but near Socoh, now Khirbet Shuweikeh; large ruins, apparently of a village; ruined houses and foundations, caves, rock-cut cisterns are on a low hill. 'All the land of Hepher,' not identified. Dor, supposed to be Tantûra, nine miles from Cæsarea, on the coast. All these, it will be seen, are posts westward. Now the line swings round, for Taanach and Megiddo are enumerated. Some think these are on the plain of Esdraelon, but Major Conder places Megiddo at the foot of Gilboa in the Jordan Valley. Taanach is supposed to be Ta'nnuk. Various sites have been proposed for Megiddo. 'Zartanah beneath Jezreel' is thought by Major Conder to be Tell Sarêm, three miles south of Bethshean; other capable authorities place it at Tell el Zahrah, three miles west of Bethshean. Then comes Bethshean, that stronghold at the foot of the Valley of Jezreel; Abel-meholah ('the meadow of the dance'), on the low, swampy ground of Jordan Valley, supposed to be 'Ain Helweh, nine miles south of Bethshean; Jokneam, unknown; Bengeber (see marginal reading, chapter iv. 13), some place in Ramoth Gilead. Over the river, on the eastern side, are those towns of Jair, in Gilead; Argob, before described; Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brazen bars, and it is here where now we find ruins of towns so thickly scattered about; Mahanaim; Naphtali; Asher, which had the 'plain or valley which lay over against Sidon.' Such is Josephus's account. This territory probably extended to the great promontory called the Ladder of Tyre, which was crowded with cities, now all in ruins.

Bealoth, or as rendered by A.V. 'in Aloth,' unknown;

Issachar, the rich central plain; Benjamin, with its hills; then across the Jordan again to Gilead. And here, in the country of Sihon, King of the Amorites,* and of Og, King of Bashan—that is, in the country which aforetimes belonged to those kings—there was only one officer. We see how completely the whole land was mapped out, and these men had to raise in their province the food the king required, probably without payment in money, or their taxes might be taken in produce. In many parts of Palestine now the writer has met with the same custom; for he has been informed by Turkish pashas that when they wanted food either for themselves or their horses they sent to each village in their district in succession, and made requirements to the local officer for what they needed. So these commissariat stations must not be taken as any thought of Solomon's either for store cities, for attack or defence—as were Pithom and Rameses for the Egyptians—nor store cities for the people; simply and solely an arrangement so that the vast supplies needed for his court at Jerusalem might be forthcoming, and so that no part of the kingdom escaped. It is not without point that in Bashan only one officer was appointed. The Israelitish hold on this province was not strong, and, therefore, probably their demands were fewer. We see this in the next verses, for Solomon is said to have ruled from 'the River,' the Euphrates, unto the land of the Philistines, unto the border of Egypt, now known as 'El 'Arish,' sometimes called the 'River of Egypt,' the stream which divides the south-west of Palestine from the Egyptian frontier. Then follows the account of what he required for *one* day. The list is prodigious. Again comes

* How strong was the influence of the Amorites on the Israelites, not only in faith, but in blood, we can see from Ezek. xvi. 3, when, speaking of Jerusalem, the prophet says, 'Thy father was an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite.'

an account of his territory on this side the river from Tiphsah, placed on the western bank of the Euphrates. This was an important position for his caravan trade, a good ford being near. It was great and prosperous even in the days of Xenophon and the Ten Thousand. Xenophon also relates that the fords were good and easy, there being at times no more than twenty inches of water. Now a ruined causeway marks the site. Solomon was not a conqueror, as was David; and fatally, as we shall see, he had allied himself to Egypt—had married an Egyptian princess. The then rulers of Egypt were no longer the warrior race of Rameses, but the priestly kings of the twenty-first dynasty, and their hold on their empire was feeble. Egypt was, in short, falling to pieces. An account of Solomon's wisdom follows; of his knowledge; and the visitors he had from 'all the kings of the earth.' That in Eastern language is a way of saying that those peoples near Palestine came to see and hear this famous king. For a brief moment the Jew holds high *earthly* power—only for one brief life. But we must not anticipate. Hiram of Tyre, the old friend of David, is one of the first to send congratulations, and in reply Solomon tells of his determintion to build a temple. Palestine being a country in which the trees did not grow to any size, except a few large terebinths and olives—the latter a brittle wood, and only suited for ornaments—he wishes for cedar, and he begs Hiram will furnish him with the required wood. He will pay for the services of the Tyrian woodcutters; they were as well known to the ancient world as the American or Canadian lumbermen are known to us. Cedar-wood was exported by the Tyrian sailors, and used in Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia. A choice tree and expensive, its great size made it suitable for palaces or temples. Hiram replies he shall not only have the cedar, but the fir, or cypress, timber he requires. They are to be sent in rafts to any place named by

Solomon. We know they were received by him at Joppa, and the thought occurs that many a raft must have been lost, even by the expert Tyrian raftsmen, if the port of Joppa was no better in old days than it is now. Solomon in exchange gives wheat—for Tyre had little land of its own—and pure oil—olive-oil, which to Easterns took the place of butter. A huge levy, or corvée, is sent from Israel—thirty thousand men; ten thousand a month were in Lebanon, and then they had two months' rest at home. Now, these would be the labourers required to bring down the timber from the hills—the 'unskilled labour,' in short, for Zidonian woodcutters were to cut the trees. Stones are now prepared—'great stones,' 'costly stones,' cut by Hiram's builders and the Gebalites—these last a Phœnician people, from the region between Beyrout and Tripoli, famed through the ancient world for skilful workmen. Where were these stones prepared? Probably in the quarries under Jerusalem, which are now called the Cotton Grotto, the entrance to which is near the Damascus Gate. There an opening was found in 1852 which leads to the quarry. The roof, about thirty feet high, is roughly hewn. You go over ground covered with chips. For about 650 feet the excavations are sloping. Stalactites hang from the roof; the floor is strewn with stones, some cut, others in the rough. Chisel-marks are clear on the one, and quarry-marks on the others. In the walls of the quarry some stones still half-cut remain. Bits of pottery, bits of charcoal, have been found with bones of animals and men. Some of the rocks show where lamps were placed to give light to the workers. Such is the place where probably the stones were prepared. We are then told that while building no sound of 'hammer, or axe, nor any tool of iron,' was heard in the house. 'While building!' This statement, therefore, means that in the quarry the stones were so accurately fitted that they required no alteration on the spot

where the wall was to be erected. The reader must refer to the publications of the Palestine Fund to read the full and detailed account of all the work done there by shafts and underground chambers. Sufficient here to say that shafts had to be driven to the depth of eighty to one hundred and twenty feet; that these shafts passed through dangerous rubble or débris, remains of the successive destructions of Jerusalem; that passing through these layers they came at last to fat mould, varying in some places from two to three feet, in others (at the south-east angle) from eight to ten feet. *No stone chips* in this mould, which lay on the living rock—the original foundation; but in this black earth are found bits of broken potsherds, old lamps for burning fat; and, what is still more remarkable, this layer of black earth was cut away at an angle to allow of the stones being lowered to the rock, which had especially been prepared to receive the stone, so that each first or foundation stone was let into the living rock. Had the stones not been prepared in the quarry, as asserted in Scripture, *plenty of stone chippings must have been found in this black earth.* It is one of the most splendid confirmations of the truth of Holy Writ.

Low down at the very base of the excavations, in a niche cut out of the rock, was found a Phœnician jar. Who put it there, and for what? After being there for more than 3,000 years, it is now at the office of the Palestine Exploration Fund. But still other facts press upon us. Hiram sent his Phœnician masons, we are told—for, remember, the Jew was never a builder. Though no stone chippings were found in the black mould, fragments of potsherds were, the inscriptions on which are in Phœnician character. One appears to mean 'belonging to King Zepha.' The jar-handles had an eagle's crest engraved on them; still further characters in red paint were found, copied and photographed by magnesium wire.

These characters are also Phœnician, and re-repeat numerals, special masons' marks, and quarry signs. Marks of this sort have hitherto only been found at Zidon. Now, what do these marks prove? Why, that the Biblical accounts which tell of a master-builder, a Phœnician being *the* architect, are absolutely correct, and these red marks which one could look on a few years ago, before the exploration shafts were closed by order of the Turkish Government, are really marks made when Solomon laid the foundations of the Temple. I am well aware that distinguished explorers have said they consider nothing remains at Jerusalem earlier than the time of Herod, but I have studied the question to the best of my ability, and seen the things spoken of, and must cast in my lot with those equally distinguished explorers who consider that here we have undoubted traces of the wall of Solomon. We never read that Herod employed Phœnician workmen; then why should these marks appear? To my mind the proof is conclusive that, anyhow, in these foundations we see the very stones put down by Solomon and the Phœnician builders. As to the words 'great stones' 'costly stones,' one stone at the south-east angle is estimated to weigh 100 tons; another at the south-west angle is thirty-eight feet nine inches long; other stones are three feet eight inches to four feet in height.* Some are 'squared' stones; some in foundation walls are rough; other stones are fourteen to eighteen feet in length, three feet ten inches to four feet six inches in height. Near Robinson's arch was found in the excavations a *hollow wall*, built, it is supposed, to save stone; other subterranean passages, apparently to bring troops from the citadel to the Temple, were found, of what date it is impossible to say; but these early builders were well accustomed to underground

* The oldest stones are supposed to be those under Wilson's arch, and are three feet eight inches to four feet long.

passages. Vaults, cisterns, underground passages for sewage, abound. The reader must be referred for full details to Sir Charles Warren's work, 'The Recovery of Jerusalem.'

What were the cherubs? Probably much like those sculptures found in Assyria, with a human winged figure standing on either side of the ark, as seen in so many Egyptian pictures, for the art of Solomon's time was allied to that of all surrounding nations, and *the* Temple probably much resembled in shape those of Egypt. The work is finished, and Solomon now makes vessels of burnished brass. 'These were made in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan.' Succoth, from the accounts of the battle with the Midianites, must be east of Jordan, and the Sakût, proposed by some travellers, on the western side, will not fulfil the necessary requirements. Kŭrn Sŭrtŭbeh has been suggested, which preserves the name. The Damieh ford is close by.

'Solomon had finished the building of the temple of the Lord.' So runs the Biblical account. It is now for us briefly to see something of what has been discovered. These are the following points:

I. The site; II. The way the foundation was prepared; III. The position of the altar of burnt-offering.

To enter fully even into these would require a volume; at the risk of recapitulating some points already touched on, we briefly note—

I. *The Site.*

It is proved, I think, without doubt, that the 'Dome of the Rock,' or the Mosque of Omar, covers the true site of Solomon's Temple. Able men have written exhaustive books to endeavour to prove that the site was elsewhere; for instance, as to the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. But most of these books were written before the excavation works

of Sir Charles Warren, though it is true of the late Mr. Fergusson, that he held his views to the last. No evidence contrary to his opinion had any effect upon him; but surely the stubborn belief of an able man, formed, be it remembered, before the spade and pick revealed so much of old Jerusalem, cannot outweigh facts. So we must take it for proved that this 'Dome of the Rock' and the 'Haram' enclosure really cover the site of Solomon's Temple. 'The plateau is about 1,500 feet from north to south, 900 feet from east to west, sustained by a massive wall rising on the exterior from 50 to 80 feet above the present level of the ground. The general level of this plateau is about 2,420 feet; but towards the east at the Golden Gate, it is not filled up to this level by some 20 feet or so.'

'Almost in the centre of this plateau is an irregular four-sided paved platform, rising some sixteen feet above the general level of the plateau, and above the centre of this platform the sacred rock crops out, over which is built the celebrated Dome of the Rock. There is no question but that within the present noble sanctuary the Temple of Herod once stood, and that some part of the remaining wall is on the site of, or actually is, a portion of the old wall of the outer court.'

It is proved that the Holy City is built upon a series of rocky spurs, and that in early days the site of Jerusalem was a series of rocky slopes; therefore, when we get to the rock, we see it just as it was before the city was built. The rock-levels examined by means of shafts and tunnels show that the ridge of rock at the north-east angle is 162 feet below the sacred rock; at the north-west angle, 150 feet below this same rock; south-west angle, 163 feet. The temple was not placed in a hole; it was to be a conspicuous building—*the* building, in short, of Jerusalem. So it must have stood on this platform which was raised by means of walls, arches, the spaces being

used as storerooms ; secret passages, underground cisterns to hold water, to store both the spring water and the rain water —one cistern so large that it is called the 'underground sea.' This platform was raised and carried across to the highest point of rock, which, remember, was the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, by which 'floor' the angel's foot had stayed.

II. *The Way the Foundation was prepared.*

The lower ridge of rock having been selected, black mould was cut away at an angle. In this black mould no stone chippings were found, but fragments of potsherds. The mould varied in depth from two feet to eight or ten feet. The rock in which the foundation-stones stand is found to be very soft. This rock was cut through to the extent of two feet, to ensure that the prepared stone had a secure position. All these details have been proved by the shafts dug by Sir Charles Warren —shafts which varied in depth from 85 to 120 feet. It is curious to notice that at the south-east angle a hole was found cut in the natural rock. This hole was only one foot across and one foot deep. In the hole a little earthenware jar was found standing upright. For what purpose it was so placed who can tell? It may have contained the oil to consecrate the corner-stone, or it may only have been a quaint fancy of some Phœnician workman. Anyhow, it was discovered after an interval of 3,000 years. Now we note the Bible passage, 'that no tool was heard' during the erection of the house of God. The absence of stone chippings prove that this statement is true. Anyone who has watched the erection of a house will have noticed the constant clang of the iron tools, and the heaps of brick or stone débris lying close to the foundation. But where was the stone prepared? Come with me to the Cotton Grotto, which is the modern name of the

old quarry. The entrance till lately was near the Damascus Gate, over a rubbish-heap;* and some feet below the level of the ground you found the opening to the quarry. This opening was accidentally discovered in 1852. The entrance was so small, owing to the rubbish, that it could only be entered by stooping and letting yourself drop downwards to the floor. First came a rough floor of earth, and then stones. Quite in the heart of the quarry was found a rude basin or cistern, partly full of water. Huge stones lie scattered about—stones cut thousands of years ago. Masons' marks abound. From them you can tell the size and shape of the tools these old workers used. The marks are quite fresh, and remind you of those quarries at Assouan, in Egypt. You quite fancy it must be the dinner-hour, and that the workmen will return ere long. Some stones still remain which are only partially cut away. From the mass of stone chippings it is quite plain that the stones were 'dressed' here. The absence of stone chips near the foundation-stones—the black earth being quite free of them—and their presence here, prove to the very hilt the truth of the Bible statement. And then the red marks! These mysterious letters and marks in red paint sorely puzzled the explorers in the tunnels they drove along the foundation wall. These red marks are Phœnician lettering and numerals—instructions, in short, from the master-builder to the workmen where to lay each stone—and we can fancy Hiram, the great master-mason of the Phœnicians, standing on this black earth and seeing that his Sidonian workmen and the subject-races of Canaan placed each stone in due order according to his plan. Here, again, we have a most wonderful, unlooked-for confirmation of the Bible statement. The Bible says that Phœnician builders

* Very lately cleared out, and an inclined causeway was found to lead to the opening. The Turkish Government now make a small charge on visitors, to pay for the clearing out of this old causeway.

built the Temple. We find, after digging shafts from 85 to 120 feet, that red marks of Phœnician meaning are on the foundation-stone. Then that 'No tool was heard,' and no chips are found. And who that has seen—or, if not seen, realized from description—the size of the stones, the great foundation-stone at the south-east angle, will not say that the words 'costly stones' is but a true and apt description, and that the words 'great stones' is no exaggeration? When we recollect that stones estimated to weigh 100 tons are in the foundation wall, that in length they can be found 38 feet 9 inches, as in the south east angle, surely we must admit that the account is but sober truth.

III. *The Position of the Altar of Burnt-offering.*

The inquiry may have arisen, Why this great wall? this expenditure of stone, labour, skill? There is one factor we must not overlook. The Temple was to be erected over the threshing-floor of Araunah. This is imperative; that was a sacred spot—because the angel had stayed his foot there, *that* must be left. But Eastern threshing-floors are always, and were always, at the highest points of the ridge, and so the problem is complicated. They cannot cut down the highest point, and *so* obtain a large area for the proposed Temple. That is impossible; all that remains is to leave the sacred threshing-floor intact, and by building this huge wall, arches, and other supports, so get an *enlarged area*, big enough for the Temple and the Temple courts. In this way they solved the problem. We can even see how they did it—those Phœnician builders. And what do we see now on entering the 'Dome of the Rock'? I do not propose to describe the richness and beauty of the interior—only the *one* object for which this mosque was erected; and that is a huge mass of rock untouched,

or nearly so, by chisel. Here, undoubtedly, was the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite—a threshing-floor probably long before, for the word 'Jebusite' is said to mean 'threshing-floor people.' From Zion David could look down on this ridge. And it has other memories too, for was not this 'Moriah,' that hill on which Abraham offered Isaac? So this unshaped mass of rock has very special sanctity. When I visited the mosque some years ago, a huge carpet was suspended over it by ropes from the dome, so that dust could not descend upon it; a low railing prevented anyone touching the surface. Sir Charles Warren found a gutter cut in the rock, probably to drain off the blood of the sacrifices. If you descend some steps, you pass *under* the rock into a cave, and then you notice that a hole in the roof of the cave shows that there is an opening, while certainly under your feet the floor of the cave sounds hollow, and is said by the Moslems to be the 'well of lost spirits'; but it is thought to really be the beginning of some aqueduct or drain to carry off the blood from the sacrifices.

Huge vaults exist below the Temple, but all excavation work has long been stopped by order of the Turkish Government. Cedar-wood was most extensively used in the inner ornamentation of the Temple, also gold. The designs of the ornaments, we are told, were palm-trees and open flowers, except the cherubs, for the Hebrew was forbidden to represent the human figure, as did the heathen. The stonework was concealed in the interior by this cedar-wood. A palace was also built for his Egyptian queen; and of this we get much the same description as to stones and interior arrangements. Experts differ so much as to the site of this palace that it is impossible at present to say exactly where it was situated. Then follows the dedication prayer, and the people present are described as coming from the uttermost limits of the kingdom. A warning is then given to the king that if Israel forsakes the Lord then

this proud and stately Temple shall be destroyed, and Israel cut off and made a 'byword.' Solomon gave Hiram 'twenty cities,' or villages, in Galilee for the services his servants had rendered. Out of curiosity, the King of Tyre came to see them, and thought them of such little worth that he called them 'Cabul' (1 Kings ix. 13) ('worthless'). This Phœnician king, true to the naval instincts of his race, despised everything but the seaboard. These old sailors of the ancient world seem never to have cared for land other than as a port—just a foothold where they could touch and barter their goods. So inland villages would be thought very little of. Other great works are now undertaken. Millo, 'the tower or citadel,' would seem to have been strengthened or enlarged, also the 'wall' of Jerusalem; then Hazor, that stronghold in Galilee destroyed by Joshua, near the waters of Merom. Probably to guard the northern frontier, this city is rebuilt. Then Megiddo, that disputed site on the plain of Esdraelon; then Gezer. This last site has been recovered in Tell Jezer, a ruined town near the foot of the Judæan hills; it lies on the coast road to Egypt. Hence it was important to fortify it.

Solomon, not being a warlike king, had obtained Gezer through Pharaoh, King of Egypt. It has been suggested that at this time the Philistines were under Egyptian sway and had rebelled, hence the capture and destruction of Gezer; and Solomon, seeing its importance for trade, rebuilt it, especially, too, as his Egyptian father-in-law had given it to Solomon's wife.

Beth-horon the nether is then built. There are two Beth-horons, one site being some distance up the hill from the other, entirely agreeing with the description given in the Book of Joshua. Here, again, this was an important road—*the* road from the lowlands to Jerusalem. Remains of huge cisterns and large walls exist, with numerous ruins of a later period.

The Crusaders came along it—

The Romans scarped and enlarged this difficult mountain road. Its position is very commanding, as the whole of the lower hills and plains lie open to view, with the great sea beyond. Then comes Baalath in Dan; also Tadmor, situated in the desert between Palestine and Babylonia, on the main caravan route; this was a commercial centre. The latter city became most powerful, and fell at last under Rome. Splendid ruins still attest its ancient grandeur, and it has been suggested that it is not impossible that it may one day again be the centre of a large overland trade. All these cities were selected with a view to trade, and the vanity of the Jew must have been amply fed; for these works were not done by Jews, but the subject nations. Horses and chariots were introduced from Syria at great cost—a chariot costing £100, and chariot horses £50 the pair. Solomon's plans were grand and large-minded, but carried out in too despotic a way, as we shall hereafter see. He forced the nation at too great a pace. Not content with extending his conquests by land, he sought to win commerce by sea; so ships were constructed at Ezion Geber, the head of the Gulf of Akabah—a silent sea now, undisturbed by screw or sail. Ruins exist at the head of the gulf. Again we see that as the Jew was no builder, so he was no shipwright; for from distant Tyre Hiram sends his servants, and sends sailors, too, to train the servants of Solomon. These ships go to Ophir,* 'which some have thought to be in

* 'For the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish with the navy of Hiram. Once *every three years* came the navy of Tarshish bringing gold and silver,' etc. This gold, silver, etc., is said, in another passage, to come from Ophir —which some think to be the South of Arabia, others India. 'It cannot be urged that this distant country was too far for Phœnician sailors, for Herodotus proves that Pharaoh Necho (B.C. 617-601) circumnavigated Africa. Necho, so says Herodotus, was the first to prove that Libya (Africa) is surrounded by sea, except the part where it is connected with Asia. He sent Phœnician sailors and ships, ordering them to return by the Pillars of Hercules to the Mediterranean and Egypt. These sailors, ac-

India, from the fact that the words used for ivory, peacocks, apes, etc., are South Indian words for the same animals. But there was an old coast trade between India and Yemen, and Indian traders probably brought to Ophir Indian products, which Solomon's servants brought up the Red Sea. Ophir seems clearly to be in Yemen, or Southern Arabia; evidently, too, the same place from which the Queen of Sheba came; and it is said she came with camels, etc. (1 Kings x. 2), which shows hers was an overland journey, and that the fable of her coming from Abyssinia has not grounds of fact to rest on. Here, again, this queen could come up on the old caravan road through Mecca and Medina, now a journey taken every year by pious Moslems. She is shown all the wonders of the Temple and its riches; but the one thing which especially seems to have impressed her was the 'ascent,' by which Solomon went up to the house of the Lord. This 'ascent' is thought to have been a bridge over the Tyropæon Valley, to connect Zion, the upper hill, with Moriah. Near this corner is 'Robinson's Arch,' so called because the celebrated American traveller first noticed the importance of a huge projecting stone. That this stone projects out of an ancient wall all agree, and many explorers consider the wall to be of the date of Solomon,

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cordingly, went down the Red Sea into the Southern Ocean. Each autumn they landed on the coast of Libya which happened to be near; there they sowed corn and waited for the harvest. After reaping the corn, they embarked, and continued their voyage. In this manner they returned, in the *third year*, by way of the Pillars of Hercules. . . . They related that while sailing round Libya they had had the sun on their *right hand*.' Modern critics have tried to show that this whole narrative was false, and yet the last sentence of this old report is full evidence of its truth; for, as soon as the sailors had passed the equator, the sun must have appeared to them in the north—or on their right-hand side. Really, these sailors of Necho anticipated the discovery of the Portuguese by two thousand years. —'Ancient History,' Dr. Schmitz, pp. 85, 86.

while others think it of the time of Herod. Under the ground, however, by shafts and tunnels, fragments of older arches have been found, and it does appear reasonable to think that here was 'the ascent.' As to the full discoveries at this particular point, the reader must consult the detailed works of Sir Charles Warren.

The account then goes on to relate all the wealth which poured into Palestine. 'Linen yarn,' the famous Egyptian 'byssus,' which was not cotton. 'The father of history' calls cotton 'tree-wool.' Cotton was one of the manufactures of Egypt; priests even used it; but linen was a choice and expensive material. Some specimens brought to England from the old Egyptian tombs are of wondrous delicacy and lightness. Solomon's ships, with those of Hiram, brought treasure, as did the ships of 'Tarshish.'* There is no certain knowledge of this place. Some authorities think Tarshish, or Tarsus, to be in Asia Minor. Here the great Gulf of

* 'Solomon's conquest of the Edomites had given him possession of an important port on the Red Sea—Ezion Geber, at the head of the Elanitic Gulf, not far from Elath. Whatever access the Phœnicians may have had previously to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean through the favour of the Egyptians, it was a distinct gain to them to enjoy the free use of a new port on the southern waters, where their presence was warmly welcomed and they were allowed to build as many ships as they pleased. In return for the opening which they thus obtained to the freest and fullest commerce with the East, the Tyrians conceded to the Israelites a participation in the traffic which they had carried on for so long a time with the nations of the far West. Two trading fleets were formed, to which each of the two nations contributed both ships and men (1 Kings ix. 27, x. 22). . . . The whole of this commerce was absolutely new to the Hebrews, and effected a revolution in their habits which must have been most remarkable. . . . If Solomon derived from a single voyage the amount of 420 talents (1 Kings ix. 28), or more than four millions sterling of our money, what is Phœnicia not likely to have obtained from a continuous trade, lasting for twenty or thirty years at any rate, probably longer?'—'Phœnicia:' 'The Story of the Nations,' G. Rawlinson, M.A., pp. 101, 102.

Alexandretta comes under the rocky ridges of the Taurus. There are no ruins of any importance, and yet St. Paul says of it that it was 'no mean city.' Some, again, think that it was a Phœnician city of Spain. Even Cornwall has been named. The position is uncertain. Solomon's horses and chariots were all contrary to the will of God, and the example of the great leader, Joshua, would have been better to follow. But the 'many strange women' were at the root of all the evil. Here, again, he was breaking a most distinct command. The evil foretold came to pass. This mighty king, this great poet, thinker, genius all round, sinks so low as to pay homage to heathen gods. He became a universalist, and offers oblations to all the gods of the adjacent heathen.

Ashtaroth, the goddess of the Phœnicians, was of course an old Philistine idol—the Ishtar, or Venus, partly a worship of the moon as 'the queen of heaven'; the Asherah, also, only another name. Its rites were idolatrous, foul, and licentious. It had some connection with the tradition of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge.

Milcom, or Moloch, well characterized as the 'abomination of the Ammonites,' was a male god, a god of fire, worshipped with human sacrifice and ordeals of fire. Mutilations of children were offered to this god. It is said to have been represented by a human-like body, with an ox-head, hands stretched out, made of brass, and hollow. When thoroughly heated, the priests put the babe into its hands. Drums were then beaten to drown the cries of the little victim. The place was called 'Tophet.' Other offerings were also made. In later days the Carthaginians sacrificed to this idol, and it is related by Diodorus Siculus that on one occasion 200 children were offered, and, falling off the arms of the idol, perished in the fire! Why did not Solomon recollect what his father David had done when he took Rabbah? He led the Ammonites

through 'Malkan,'* the place where they had burned their children, not through the 'brick-kiln,' as in the A.V. (2 Sam. xii. 31). As they did to their children, so did David to them! This idol answers to Baal, the Sun-god.

Chemosh—'the abomination of Moab.' This god was also worshipped with human sacrifices. A black stone was his symbol. Jewish tradition says a 'black star.' Dhîbân, where the Moabite Stone was found, is said to have been the head-quarters of this worship, and we may note that that stone is black.

The just anger of an offended Jehovah was excited against Solomon; and the respect of his people was also sapped. But the foolish king hardened his heart. Deaf to all warnings, he goes on his fated course, so now in his old age troubles come to him. Enemies rise up, and three especially are named: Hadad, the Edomite, who had escaped when a child the fury of Joab, and was taken by faithful servants first to Midian, that haven for Moses. Then they pass the end of the Gulf of Akabah, and come to Paran, that desert bordering on Egypt, and finally take refuge in Egypt. There the then Pharaoh takes Hadad under his protection, so much so that he gave him a house and a wife, who was sister to Pharaoh's wife. All this was a thorn in the side of Solomon, and at the death of David Hadad obtained permission from Pharaoh to go to his own land. Then Rezon rebelled—he had left Hadarezer before the latter's defeat by David. He gathered men unto him, and retook Damascus and all Syria, and it would appear that Solomon, now sunk in sloth and iniquity, could not dislodge him. And, lastly, Jeroboam—he, a trusted servant of Solomon, one who had been given charge of his great works at Jerusalem, who was 'industrious,' and who had power to order all the burdens of 'the house of Joseph' (1 Kings xi. 28). Does this point to

* Another name given to Moloch, from 'melech,' 'king.'

a more pressing exaction of labour, in which *now* the Jew has to work as well as the captive races, as before stated? This man is met by a prophet—Ahijah—and told that he, the agent, is to be the ruler over ten tribes, because of the sins of the people, they following, it must be allowed, the example of the king. The idea of rebellion, it would appear, was stirred up in Jeroboam's mind by the voice of the prophet, who was a true witness. Solomon had introduced the evil; he had fallen away from the allegiance to Jehovah; the unity of the nation was gone. Jeroboam, from his position as chief of those who had to provide workers for Solomon's great works, would know well the discontent of the people. It would seem he sympathized with them, and that they knew it. They looked to him in a vague sort of way as a spokesman—nay, a deliverer. Solomon must have known the peril in which he stood, for he 'sought to kill Jeroboam,' who, like many a one before him, finds refuge in Egypt. And again Shishak is mentioned. Clouds, indeed, are gathering around the last steps of the once 'wise king.' He has neglected the true source of all wisdom, and now 'she mocks at his calamity'; she 'laughs when his fear cometh.' It is one of the saddest pictures in the whole Bible story. The moral is short. If a man sin against God—be he king, despot, rich, what you will—his power turns to ashes, his servants betray him, his money will not purchase peace.

The great king dies, and with him the empire which David's sword had carved out, and which Solomon squandered. His empire flashed, and dazzled all beholders, but it exhausted his country and exasperated his people. His greatness and empire but a bubble, and with his death it burst. In his time alone the Jews touched and possessed large territory and sovereign sway—touched it but for a moment, and lost it. Earthly empire, for which he lusted, was not to be his. This had been *the* fatal mistake all along, and it bore bitter fruit in

after-ages. Solomon is buried with his fathers in that unknown tomb. His son, Rehoboam, succeeds; he goes to Shechem, the central point of the land, and all Israel there assemble—*i.e.*, their official representatives—for the plain of Moreh would not hold the numbers even of the fighting men of David's last census. In distant Egypt Jeroboam is told. It would appear an embassy of the people went to fetch him. They looked to him as one who had sympathized with them in their burdens. It does not appear, but after-events show rather the contrary, that he had ever protested against the foul worship of heathen gods. No; but he had been known as an advocate for the people under their burdens when Solomon laid such exactions on them when building Millo and repairing the breaches in the City of David. He returns; he is chosen spokesman of the people; and, backed by the people, he asks Rehoboam the king to lighten their burdens. The service had been 'grievous,' the yoke 'heavy'; if he will lighten it, then they will serve him. The king seems sensible at first, for he asks for three days to consider. He consults the old men who had been rulers under his father; their advice is to remit the burdens. This is distasteful to him. Then he consults the young men, those who had grown up with him, all of whom, like himself, were unused to responsibility. They, with boasting, insulting words, met the just demands of suffering and wronged men with bluster; blind were they that the moment when they might make peace was passing away. The insolent answer of the king stung the people, and the cry rang out, 'To your tents, O Israel!' The king sends an officer, Adoram—the one who was over the levy, a known taskmaster, and probably hated too. Another blunder! He was stoned to death by the enraged people, and Rehoboam flies in his chariot to Jerusalem. All Israel followed Jeroboam, and only Judah is faithful to the son of Solomon. The empire vanished in a moment. There is

something remarkable in the cry 'To your tents, O Israel!' Israel still dwelt in tents, and one of those things which strike an explorer is that it is about Jerusalem that ruined villages and cities cluster chiefly. The people up to this time as a mass lived very much in tents.

The folly of Rehoboam and his gay companions brought about the fulfilment of prophecy. This was the way God's will was to be done.

Rehoboam assembles an army from Judah and Benjamin, but he is forbidden to fight Israel. Jeroboam then builds, or more probably fortifies, Shechem, and makes it his residence. Penuel, the border city and town across Jordan, is also rebuilt. And now he, not acknowledging God at all, thinks to for ever keep apart the kingdom. He sees clearly enough that if there is to be one religious centre—the Temple—in all probability the people will ere long seek for a national reunion. So craftily he takes counsel, makes two calves of gold—the old Apis of Egypt, from which he had so recently come—erects one in Bethel, the nearest point of the kingdom to Jerusalem, and the other at Dan, its northern limit. The lowest of the people are taken as priests, and in the eighth month, the same time as the feast in Judah, he offers at the altar; he burns incense there.

He *must* have a god to support his authority; he cares not *what* god.

We then have the story of the man of God who goes to warn Jeroboam. He fulfils that mission, but, being disobedient himself, is slain by a lion. None of these things change the heart of the king until he is touched by the sickness of his son. *Then* he no longer goes to the false gods, but sends to Shiloh. He persuades his wife—no difficult task to persuade a mother—to take gifts and go to the old prophet who had first foretold his elevation as king. That prophet had doubtless lived in

seclusion at Shiloh—the busy world of separation and disunion had left that quiet glen unfrequented by worshippers. In his sore trouble, however, the heart of the king turns to Ahijah.

The anxious mother has to listen to a terrible prophecy—the only consolation given her, that he shall be 'buried in a grave,' and all because of the sins of her husband in following 'Asherim.' They shall as a nation be scattered beyond the river—the Euphrates—because of their sins in so easily following Jeroboam in his false worship. Tirzah, her home, is reached. The moment the poor mother arrives at home the child dies. Tirzah ('pleasant'), we see in the Song of Solomon vi. 4, was much esteemed for beauty. The site is disputed. Robinson thinks it to be Talluza, six miles east of Samaria; while Major Conder thinks Teîasîr, eleven miles north of Shechem, to be the place. If so, it is now represented by a small village, with an appearance of antiquity, with old tombs and some caves, lying in a secluded valley. The soil is good, the land arable. Fine and ancient olive-trees exist; while here, too, is a curious building. It resembles a tomb, and is twenty-five feet square; inside that is a chamber ten feet square, with four recesses, and an arch over each. The height seems to have been about twelve feet. Some of the stones of this building are four feet long. There is no clue, no suggestion, as to its uses, except that it is a tomb.

The death of Jeroboam follows, but the Bible story now changes to tell of Judah and the fortunes of Rehoboam. Trouble from afar has now come to him, for Shishak, King of Egypt, comes up against Jerusalem. This Pharaoh had sheltered Jeroboam, and so would have no friendship for the King of Judah and Jerusalem. And, moreover, this Egyptian was a usurper, who had gained the throne of Egypt by successful revolt. Therefore this new King of Egypt, Shishak, had more than one reason for invading Judea. On the great temple at Karnac, Shishak has

left a record of his Judean conquests, and many are the places enumerated, which show how far his conquests extended. With huge plunder he retired. It was to his interest that the war which went on between Jeroboam and Rehoboam should continue; for then *he* would have no strong enemy on *his* frontier. Another reason—subjecting Judea to tribute made it a barrier between Egypt and the dreaded enemy, Assyria. The kingdom of Egypt was decaying, and Shishak knew it, and trusted by these means to break the first shock of invasion from Assyria.

The history of the kingdom of Judah continues equally sad till Asa appears. His heart is right, but evil-doing and evil-doers had waxed great in the land. The vices of the Cities of the Plain had reared their foul heads again; and women, too, headed by the queen, his own mother, had soiled their pure womanhood. She, as the R.V. puts it, had 'made an abominable image for an Asherah.' Ashteroth (the two-horned goddess Astarte, the Cyprian Venus) had a foul and licentious worship, and 'Asherah' ('the grove'—not, as is often imagined, a 'wood' or 'grove' of trees) was some image or symbol of this goddess, capable of being 'cut down.' The stone pillar, or menhir, was the symbol of Baal, and the wooden image, or pillar, the symbol of Astarte. Ancient writers say trees were the first temples, and probably had some relation to the tradition of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. Throughout the whole heathen world examples of the worship of trees are found, as was the case with the Druids. The rites of the Cyprian Venus, as known from the records of antiquity, are too foul to describe, and from the earliest times the temptation under which Israel fell, from their first approach to the Promised Land to the last days, was this sin. We may note here that the brook Kidron must in those days have been, what its banks near

Jerusalem prove it to have been, a rapid mountain stream, though it is now filled, or nearly so, by débris. The war between the two separated portions of Solomon's kingdom still goes on, and the King of Israel proposes to stop all intercourse by building Ramah—that is, this place was to be a fortified station, commanding as it did the great north road. We see from this that, though war might prevail and kings quarrel, yet the peoples had intercourse with each other. It was impossible it should be otherwise in so small a land as Palestine, and in a place so close to Jerusalem as Ramah, only five miles north, now called Er Ram, which is a commanding position. Asa saw this threatened blockade would be so serious that he sends all his silver and gold that was left in the treasury to a foreign king, that dwelt at Damascus, to buy mercenaries. This was ever the fatal fault with the divided Jews—it has ever been the fault of all Easterns—to buy help, and then to fall under the sway of those forces they, by their shortsighted policy, had brought into the land. The King of Damascus answers the appeal. His forces attack the northern borders of the King of Israel. Ijon, a town of Naphtali, north of Banias, now thought to be El Khîam, in the fertile plain of Merj 'Ayûn, north-west of Dan, falls to the invader. Then 'Dan'—now 'Tell el Kâdy,' the northern limit of Palestine—then Abel-beth-Maacah—the city Joab besieged in the rebellion of Sheba—then 'Chinneroth.' According to the Talmud, this was a fortified city of Naphtali, the site of which is unknown; but it may apply to that *district* belonging to the Sea of Galilee, for all Naphtali also fell to the Syrians. Their country numbered nineteen cities, with their villages, in the days of Joshua, and they had many 'fenced' cities. Their territory stretched from Damascus and Upper Galilee to Lebanon. Alarmed when he heard of the great extent of this invasion, Baasha left off building this

fortified city on the frontier near Jerusalem, and retired to the secluded home at Tirzah. Then the king, Asa, causes a corvée of all his people to assemble, and the 'stones' of Ramah are taken away. One thing this again proves, that the Jew was never a builder himself. The temple was Phœnician, the walls also; and here such is considered the value of masonry that all the people fetch it away. And Asa builds Geba of Benjamin, now the ruined village of Jeba, near Michmash. Here Asa wishes to fortify, in his turn, the north road. Near the great gorge—which was really the best defence on that frontier—he also builds Mizpeh. That site is much disputed, some authorities thinking it Neby Samwîl, to the north-west of Jerusalem—that prominent hill which overlooks the plains of Philistia; others think it Scopus, part of the ridge of Olivet; Major Conder suggests that Nob and Mizpeh are one and the same place.* Two fortified posts would guard the *north* road; and the object of Asa was to guard himself against Israel. Now that the King of Jerusalem was cut off by his northern enemy from communication with Tyre and Sidon, he would be unable to avail himself of the skill of those peoples in masonry; whereas Israel, touching as they did the Phœnician boundary, had doubtless full command of their skilful help. Hence the 'stones' of Ramah were probably

* The Rev. W. F. Birch, in a most courteous letter to the writer, calls attention to some papers in the 'Quarterly Statements':

1. Adullam, January, 1884, pp. 61-70.
2. The Rock Rimmon, 1882, pp. 50-55.
3. Mizpeh, 1881, pp. 91-93; and 1882, pp. 260-262.

I will take Mizpeh first. I have re-read those papers, and frankly say I consider Mr. Birch has proved his point, which is that 'Neby Samwîl' is the true site of Mizpeh. On looking again at my own sketches, made on the spot, I find in every case that I wrote 'Neby Samwîl' (the Mizpeh). Reading at home the opinions of experts, I was shaken, and so left the matter in doubt; but Jer. xli. 12 is, I think, conclusive. There it is written that Ishmael was found 'by the great waters that are in Gibeon.' Now,

wrought by Phœnician workmen, and so Judah would prize them. Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, had to face a rebellion, and Baasha slew him at Gibbethon. This, a town of Dan, is probably represented by Kibbieh, a site on a lofty hill, surrounded by olive-trees. It was close to Philistine country, and was taken by them. Israel were laying siege to it; it does not appear that the siege was interrupted by Nadab's death. Baasha still made his court at Tirzah, and was there buried. It is at least remarkable for what a length of time the kings of Israel chose this as their abode; and we have seen that there is still existing at this place a tomb which, to say the least, must have been erected for some ruler; its size and the careful masonry prove that much.

Zimri, the lieutenant-general of Elah, Baasha's son, now rebels against his master, who, a sot, was indulging in a drunken bout in the house of his steward—probably at the vintage festival. Zimri has but a short reign of seven days, for Omri, the commander-in-chief of the army, at the moment encamped before Gibbethon, leaves that place, breaks up the siege, and comes to Tirzah, which is soon taken. Zimri sees that the game is up, retires to the palace, and sets fire to it

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Ishmael 'departed to go over to the Ammonites' (ver. 10); therefore he was going *eastwards*. Had Scopus been Mizpeh, he would not pass by 'the great waters that are in Gibeon'; which are more than two miles *west* of Scopus. Many other reasons are given by Mr. Birch. The Bible passage satisfies me.

On page 385, first edition, I remarked:

'It is hard to see how the stones from Ramah could be moved as far as Neby Samwîl.'

I had not given proper value to the passage 1 Kings xv. 22: 'King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah,' etc., 'and built Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpeh.'

When, as this passage shows, the whole nation were called out, then the task would be possible.

and perishes in the ruins. Still further do the fatal divisions go, for Tibni, another leader, now revolts against Omri; the nation is divided, but Omri—probably the more skilful warrior—conquers his opponent and succeeds to the kingdom. The old, old story of Eastern revolt is here told in a few words. The successful soldier shows his military skill in choosing the hill Samaria for his stronghold, for Samaria is one of the strongest positions possible—stronger in some senses than Jerusalem, for Samaria is an isolated hill, with fertile valleys all around, and though dominated by higher hills, yet they lie back at considerable distance, and in the days before gunpowder no enemy with bow and arrow or sling could do this fortified city any harm. Omri is buried in Samaria, and Ahab takes the throne. His downward path is swift. He thinks it a light thing to follow Jeroboam, who had set up the golden calves, and said, 'These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt' (1 Kings xii. 28). He asserts here that Aaron was right when he set up the golden calf before the mount of God in Sinai, and insinuates that the high-priest Aaron could not have been mistaken, and that, after all, Moses had had no right to break the calf in pieces, and that really they were but returning to the true original worship. Ahab goes further. He takes for wife Jezebel,* a princess of Zidon; and her god he sets up, even Baal, the male deity of the Phœnicians, a sun-god whose

* 'Hiram was succeeded by his son, who reigned seven years; then followed various conspiracies, and fifty years after Hiram, Eth-Baal, high-priest of Ashtoreth, came to the throne.

'Eth-Baal was, as already mentioned, not only king of Tyre, but also high-priest of Astarte or Ashtoreth. He seems to have been a religious enthusiast, and to have earnestly desired the spread of the Phœnician religion into other lands besides his own. To effect this purpose he married his daughter, Jezebel, whom he had thoroughly imbued with his spirit, to Ahab, King of Israel, the son of Omri, the founder of Samaria. . . . Eth-

emblems were 'menhirs,' and all their foul suggestions—a god of mere passion, not a god of righteousness; really the wor-

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Baal may have hoped to gain political advantages from the alliance, but its primary motive appears to have been religious propagandism. The Phœnician princess took with her from Tyre the paraphernalia of her religious worship, together with a sacerdotal *entourage*, which gave her at once a court of her own creatures, a band of unscrupulous adherents, and a means of displaying the ceremonial of the new religion on a most magnificent scale. Four hundred and fifty ministering priests of Baal were attached to the worship of that god in the Israelite capital, while four hundred others —devoted to Ashtoreth—hung about the royal palace at Jezreel, and feasted daily at the table which Jezebel provided for their entertainment. Ahab was persuaded to build a great sanctuary for Baal on the hill of Samaria.

'"In the interior was a kind of fastness or adytum, in which were seated or raised on pillars the figures, carved in wood, of the Phœnician deities, as they were seen in vision, centuries later, by Jezebel's fellow-countryman, Hannibal, in the sanctuary of Gades. In the centre was Baal, the sun-god; around him were the inferior divinities. In front of the temple stood, on a stone pillar, the figure of Baal alone" (Stanley, "Lectures on the Jewish Church," vol. ii., p. 246).

'Ashtoreth was worshipped under the form of an emblem rather than of a statue. The emblem, which was sometimes of wood, sometimes of metal, was called an Ashérah, and is thought to have resembled the "Sacred Tree" of the Assyrians; it was generally set up in a temple (2 Kings xxi. 7, xxiii. 6), but may sometimes have been worshipped in the open air, under the deep shade of trees. Hence the Greek translators of the Hebrew Scriptures, confounding it with its surroundings, rendered the term "grove," which the Vulgate replaced by *lucus*, whence the "grove" of the Authorized Version.

'The daughter of Eth-Baal passed on the malign contagion of her evil genius to her own daughter Athaliah, a daughter worthy of such a mother, who became the queen of Ahaziah, monarch of the rival kingdom of Judah, and took advantage of her position to bring Judah, no less than Israel, within the sphere of the fatal fascination. The terrible *virus* by her introduced into the Jewish State clung to it to the end, and hastened that end. Vain were the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah. The Phœnician rites brought in by Athaliah took a firm hold on the Jewish people, and are declared by Ezekiel (chap. viii. 6-18) to have been among the chief causes of the captivity.'—'Phœnicia,' 'The Story of the Nations,' G. Rawlinson, M.A., pp. 107-110.

ship of the power of evil unrestrained. And so in time Baal becomes Baalzebub—the Prince of Devils! Ahab argues: Foreign nations are great, prosperous. Why not try their gods? He also builds an altar to the female deity, for he makes an Asherah, and does more to provoke the Lord God than all the kings that had gone before him. He had run riot in wickedness, and cast off all restraint on evil passions. And now, in his days—regardless of the curse of Joshua—Hiel the Bethelite attempts to rebuild Jericho—apparently on the old foundations. The word is sure, and the curse is fulfilled.

Elijah now suddenly appears, his name meaning 'converter.' No parentage is given, his birthplace is unknown, other than from Gilead, which, far from courts, had so often given leaders and deliverers to Israel. The licentious worship introduced by Ahab rouses him, and with terrible suddenness we read his first message to the king: 'As the Lord the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall be no dew or rain these years, but according to my word' (1 Kings xvii. 1). What a picture! The king, Ahab, lapped in luxury, caring for costly things and things of beauty—for did he not make an ivory palace and build cities?—confronted by this wild Bedawy, with his scant desert dress. He, in short, tells the king: 'Your gods are dead, afar off. The God of Israel is near, a God who rules the seasons. He, the God of your forefathers, gives rain and appoints harvest-time and winter, and in His name I foretell this dire calamity.' Elijah immediately leaves, and hides in the brook Cherith. The traditional site of this brook is now the Wâdy Kelt, a wild glen which runs into the Jordan Valley, a small stream running through it; but the Bible expression, 'facing' or 'before' Jordan, would seem to imply that it was east of that river, and therefore in Elijah's own native country of Gilead, out of Ahab's reach. It has not

been identified, but it is thought Wâdy Yabis, opposite Beth-shean, may be the place. The prophet is fed in a miraculous manner. No rain falling, the brook dries up, and he is ordered to go to Zarephath, belonging to Zidon. This place would be of easy access if the brook Cherith were east of Jordan. Zarephath, now called Surafend, is the Sarepta of the New Testament. It is on the seashore north of Tyre. The old town was probably nearer the seashore than the present village. The encroachment of the sands probably had something to do with the change of position. The old ruins are considerable, and show that it was a city of some size. Broken columns, marble slabs, old foundations, strew the ground for about a mile, while old Crusading ruins attest the simple faith of those days which identified 'sites' so easily—for is there not an old chapel, now a Moslem 'wely' or sacred place, which is said to occupy the very site the widow's house stood on—for to a poor widow was the prophet ordered to go. She, in her extremity, has come to the last handful of meal—for the famine has reached even here. And yet, such is her *faith*, her hospitality to this poor vagrant—for such the prophet must have looked—that she shares the morsel and has a rich return. How little did the great ones of Zarephath know or care about the miracle that was being wrought in their midst! It has been ever so in the providence of God. Not many mighty are called. The prophet delivers his message and promise, and that promise is fulfilled, and for 'many' days did this household eat of the meal and taste the oil, and it failed not. We may note here that oil in eastern lands took the place of butter with us. A greater miracle is then wrought, for the widow's son is restored to life at the prayer of the prophet. Three years have passed, and now Elijah is ordered to show himself to Ahab. The famine in Samaria was sore. The direct narrative pauses for a moment to explain that Ahab has a servant, Obadiah,

'who feared the Lord greatly.' Strange that for controller of his household Ahab should have one who revered God, and who had not followed the courtly example of worshipping Baal! And now we are very tersely shown how intolerant false religion ever was and is. Jezebel had slain the prophets of the Lord, except the hundred men hidden by Obadiah. Ahab sends Obadiah in search of water; the king dividing the search of the land with his agent shows how severe was the drought.

Samaria, a land of good springs, was then waterless. It is quite of a type of this king's doings that he is represented as caring chiefly for his 'horses and mules.' He wishes to find grass, that they may be kept alive. The poor, silly French queen, when told that her subjects had no bread, said, 'Why do they not buy cakes?' It was ever the rule in the ancient world; there was little or no thought of the poor; the rich, the noble, the warrior—they were considered to be the *nation*. It is only in the Bible that the poor are considered. In Greece or Rome, and worse still in Egypt or Assyria, the poor were but serfs, chattels; and it is entirely owing to the Word of God that the poor are taken into account. The remark may go further. You can read pages upon pages of heathen literature, Greek or Roman, and not once find the word 'God,' while there is not a page of the Hebrew Book but you find God first—God All in all. Obadiah meets the prophet, recognises him, and also his Divine mission: for he—this high official*—falls on his face before the gaunt and rude figure

* Strange how Bible customs are continued. Some years ago, when in Cairo, we were standing close to the late Khedive, at a great ceremonial. The ruler was surrounded by his staff, rich in dress and covered with orders, when a half-naked Dervish came up, and spoke to the Khedive, who listened with attention. Such a figure could not possibly have obtained access to any western ruler. This throws light on Elijah's appearance to Ahab.

of the prophet. He beseeches Elijah not to send him back with a message to the king, for he opines that the moment he has left the prophet Elijah will be taken away by the Spirit of the Lord; and then, Ahab not finding Elijah, he (Obadiah), who has feared 'the Lord from his youth,' will be slain by the angry king. He tells Elijah how close has been the search for him; not a sheikh but has been questioned—nay, put to oath that he knew not the prophet's hiding-place. Reassured by the prophet, he goes, tells the king, and prophet and ruler meet. Haughtily the king accuses the prophet of being the cause of all the ill the nation is suffering from, while as sternly as before the fearless Elijah hurls back the charge, and distinctly tells him it is for his sin of following Baal. To put the matter to the test, Elijah proposes that all the prophets of Baal, the male deity (450 strong), and those of the Venus, the female deity (400 strong), shall assemble on Carmel in presence of all Israel. Ahab complies. He—one of those careless, fashionable kings—thought it a small matter which god he worshipped, and probably thought victory would be on the side of the biggest battalions. But Elijah goes deeper; he appeals to the *people*. Ruler and priests are beyond conviction; the *people* have to be aroused from their apathy and sin: the prophet appeals from court and priests to the masses, and their sense of right. 'Why halt *ye* between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: if Baal, follow him.' The masses are silent: they want a leader; they want conviction. This meeting is a sifting, and, like worldly men, who always dislike to be forced to decide, they prefer to halt between the two opinions. The strange scene goes on; the altar to Baal is built; the savage rites, the wild cries, the bloody sacrifices, are of no avail. Elijah taunts them, in the blazing heat of noon, that their god may be otherwise engaged—too busy, or too

careless to attend to them! And now evening draws on. The solitary prophet calls the people to greater attention. He alone repairs the altar of the Lord, which false priests have thrown down. He typifies the unity of the nation by the twelve stones. Water, at his request, is poured on the burnt offering —not once, but again and again; and then follows the prayer to the covenant God of Abraham, of Isaac, and *Israel*, and the fire from God is the answer.

At the evidence of *power*, the people fall on their faces and profess the Lord. No longer do they hesitate, but do the will of the one man. Here we see a popular religious revolution— the prophet and people against court and priests. The stern order rings out, 'Let not *one* escape.' These worn-out priests are brought down to the brook Kishon and slain. The person of the king is not touched. Elijah tells his servant to 'go up.' Seven times he does this, and the seventh time sees the cloud 'arising out of the sea as small as a man's hand.' From one of the near tops of Carmel the servant would command a most extensive view, and chiefly seaward and looking west, from which the Syrian rain-clouds come, he would look over towards the distant island of Cyprus, and see the small cloud rising over that land—a cloud which foretold the coming rain even as it does now.*

And while the prophet spoke the heavens grew black with

* See 'Quarterly Statement,' July, 1889, G. Schumacher: 'The first point to consider is, where was the place where Elijah stood when he said to his servant, "Go up now, look towards the sea" (1 Kings xviii. 43)? Verse 42 states that it was on "the top of Carmel." It is beyond doubt that by "the top of Carmel" that place is meant now called "El Muharka" (or El Mahrakah), the burning-place, situate on one of the most conspicuous summits of Mount Carmel, which, from its geographical position, just above the Kishon river and the Tell el Kŭssîs—the adopted (Baal) priest's hill— with its unique view over the whole surrounding country and the sea, in every point answers the biblical description of the Elijah miracle. From

clouds and winds, and there was a great rain! How true this description is the writer can testify from his own experience in 1875, while on Carmel. Bright hot sunshine, and not a cloud; suddenly he saw quite a small patch far away over the distant sea. Almost before he had realized it, the whole sky was dark with clouds; he had barely time to reach his tent and call all his men before the storm of wind and tropical rain was down. In spite of all efforts tents were blown down, while the whole landscape was blotted out with the darkness of the storm. Trees only a few yards away were hardly to be seen from the gloom and the sheets of rain; the whole coast-line was blotted out. An hour after the heavy clouds rolled away, inky black in their depths, and distant Acre stood out like a pearl against the gloom. Sunshine came again, and all was still. It is satisfactory to be able to say that the site of this great gathering and sacrifice of the altar is probably the place now called El Mahrakah ('the place of burning' or 'sacrifice'). It is a peak, and forms the south-eastern extremity of the main range of Carmel. This peak is a semi-isolated top, with a cliff some forty feet high, looking south-east. Beneath is a small plateau

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this point the Mediterranean Sea can be seen in two directions, viz., looking south-west and north; between those two views some near heights and the entire range of Carmel intercept the view.

'Now Elijah told his servant, "*Go up now*, look towards the sea," which indicates that he went a little forwards on to one of those heights, and considering that all the sudden storms and heavy rains in our neighbourhood come from the west and south-west, I would call the direction whence the rain-clouds "arose out of the sea" (as seen from El Mahrakah) the west-south-west.

'The monks of Mount Carmel have now widened and rebuilt the chapel on the Mahrakah summit, which, with its whitewashed roof, shines out conspicuously. The traveller coming from Jaffa or Nablûs, from the East of Jordan or Galilee, from Safed, 'Acca, or Tyre, finds this monument on the top of Mount Carmel a guiding point for his journey.'

with olive-trees, and a huge dry reservoir; below the plateau is a well cut out of the rock. From the summit of the cliff, westwards, a wonderful view is got of the Great Sea; northwards, Hermon, and part of the Lebanon chain; while to the east Nazareth, Tabor, Nain, Shunem, all lie below. From the earliest times tradition has asserted that an ancient altar stood here. Tacitus mentions it: 'A mountain known as Mount Carmel, on the top of which A GOD is worshipped under no other title than that of the place, and according to the *ancient* usage *without* a *temple* or even a *statue*,' etc.

Mahrakah, the plateau, would give space for the multitude; the well would give water to be poured on the altar; and 1,400 feet below is the Kishon, where the priests were slain. Only from the *very* summit can the sea be seen, and Elijah's command to his servant was '*Go up*, and look towards the sea.' That sea cannot be seen from the plateau on which it is most probable that the altar stood. To sum up: no other point on the Carmel range fulfils the conditions required, even if we leave out of consideration the Arabic tradition. It is venerated by Jews, Christians, Moslems, Druses, and Bedawin, as the site of the miracles of Elijah, and no other site has been suggested except one, called Tell el Kŭssîs ('the hillock of the priest'). This name is applied to a shapeless mound near the river-bank. This knoll lies between the ridge and the plain; it may have had some connection with the miracle, for it is hard to believe that Ahab's chariot could have ascended to Mahrakah, and the advice, 'Make ready thy chariot'—in other words, 'Send orders for it to be ready'—shows, I think, that the place where the chariot stayed was not at the place of the altar up the hill. This advice was probably given because the prophet knew that this storm would swell the Kishon, and render it impassable for chariots. On one occasion the writer arrived at the ford on the Kishon, close to this place; a sudden

storm compelled him to halt for half an hour, and then the stream was so big that with considerable danger and difficulty he crossed. Then across the Plain of Esdraelon to Jezreel went Ahab. The roads must have been in better condition then than now, even though the chariots were rough, or to drive from the Kishon to Jezreel would be no enviable task. Elijah, now excited and inspired by the Lord, girds up his loins and runs before Ahab to Jezreel.

You may see the 'girding' now. Whenever any difficult or lengthened journey has to be done, the loose skirt is gathered up, one end tucked tightly into the girdle, leaving legs and thigh bare and free for work, for running or fording. And so like an Eastern Sâis, or forerunner, the prophet set out. In Syria this is little seen now, but nobles still use them in Egypt. When, years ago, the writer was the guest of the late Khedive, two Sâsah ran through Cairo in front of his carriage, calling out in Arabic: 'Out of the way!' 'Out of the way!' 'Guard yourself!' etc. With rod in hand, these men would use it freely over camel or ass, or even foot-passenger, who happened to be in the way. From Carmel to the entrance of Jezreel would be nearly twenty miles. It shows the splendid physical strength of this stern Bedawy prophet Elijah. Ahab had probably been accompanied by his own servants on his outward journey, for we know that the kings had men to run before their chariots; perhaps, in the confusion caused by the slaughter of the priests, these men were no longer available. Like all men, Elijah is a strange compound of courage and timidity, for when Jezebel hears the news she sends a message which strikes terror into the heart of this prophet, who so short a time before has been so fearless. And so to Beersheba, the southern limit of the land, he flies; leaves his servant there while he goes a day's journey further into the wilderness; and then, exhausted by fatigue, heat, and wanting food and water,

he crawls to a juniper-tree—not a 'tree' in reality, but 'retem,' the desert-shrub, which grows in the Sinai Desert. It is really a broom-bush, its usual size about that of an English gooseberry-bush; but yet in that dreary desert a most grateful shade for *the head*, as the writer has often proved in long foot wanderings in that same weary land. Wearied out, tired of life, physically exhausted, the poor prophet prays for death. The sting is, he finds that he is human—'not better than my fathers.' He had been more than man had he not been elated by his victory over the priests of Baal. He now, however, finds he is but man, after all. By the goodness of God he is not left to die. An angel shows him a cake baked on the hot stones—just as Bedawîn still do to-day—and a cruse, or jar of water. After refreshing sleep, he is told to go to Horeb, 'the mount of God.' No note of his route, but in any case the way is long and difficult. There, in those grand granitic solitudes, the disappointed prophet is taught. He thought there would be at once some grand national repentance of Israel when they saw his victory over the priests of Baal, and so now despondency prevails after the high excitement, and in despair he cries: 'I, even I, only am left, and they seek my life!' (1 Kings xix. 14).

Not far from the Convent of Sinai you come to the top of the ravine, where stands a ruined archway; near it, a natural trough in the rock, which collects rain-water; further on, two ruined chapels, one dedicated to Elijah, the other to Elisha. In the inner chapel, at the right hand of the altar, is a grotto, said to be the very cave in which the prophet hid. The whole ruins and rocks are scribbled with names—Moslem as well as Christian. The whole of this portion of Sinai is called by the monks 'the Mount of Elias.' Such is but mere tradition. Strengthened by a vision, the prophet is told now to take another long journey to the wilderness of Damascus. God has

still work for him to do: to anoint Hazael king over Syria, and Jehu king over Israel. Jehu was one of Ahab's guards, afterwards commander-in-chief. And further, he is to anoint Elisha to take his own place. At Abel-meholah ('the meadow of the dance'), in the Jordan Valley—probably about eight miles from Bethshean—Elisha the future prophet lives. Elijah had thought that he was the only worshipper. God knows and sees His own, though man cannot. Seven thousand had not bowed the knee to Baal, nor had their mouth kissed him. The Mohammedans, on beginning their prayers, bring their thumbs together, kissing them three times. They cannot kiss the hand of the unseen god in token of lowly submission, so kiss their own hand instead. In this sense we must understand the passage: A heathen, seeing an image of Serapis, raised his hand to his mouth, and pressed a kiss on it with his lips. Elisha's father must have been a man of wealth, for there were twelve yoke of oxen ploughing, two by two, and Elisha the last. He obeys the call at *once*, bids farewell to father and mother, slays his own yoke of oxen, and roasts the flesh with the ploughing instruments. His old life is henceforth dead to him. He gives food to the people and departs, and serves Elijah as servant. He gave up all and became a servant.

Ahab is besieged in Samaria by the King of Syria. He agrees to the most humiliating conditions: his treasures, wives —nay, even his children—may go to the victor. A true coward at heart, he only finds this ready acquiescence to the requests of the invader useless, for the new terms are that not only everything belonging to himself, but everything belonging to his people the invader cares for, is to be given up. Ahab cannot, dare not attempt this. A council is called, and the people of stouter heart advise a message: That all the invader had first asked for he will do; but to the increase of terms, No! In true Eastern language, the invader sends back

a boasting and insulting message, while the only wise thing recorded of Ahab is his answering speech : 'Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his armour boast himself as he that putteth it off.'

While feasting, and elated with drink, Benhadad is given the reply, and he at once orders an assault. In the other camp, some nameless prophet of the Lord came to Ahab, that he may know that the Lord He is God indeed. He will deliver the multitude of the Syrian army into his hand (1 Kings xx. 13). How long-suffering, how patient, are the ways of the Almighty ! The way is pointed out to Ahab, and he is to begin the assault. He is to have two hundred and thirty-two of the princes—the young men of the *provinces*, not the courtiers, mark—and seven thousand of the people ; that is, all there are. The sortie goes out. The drunken invader asks who these can be, and being told, says : 'If they come for peace, take them alive ; if for war, take them alive' (1 Kings xx. 18). Really the thing is too trivial—he need give no other order. Not the first soldier who had committed the fatal error of despising his adversary. His army is defeated. He and his horsemen only escape, while his chariots and their horses are the spoil of the victor. With wise advice to prepare again, the prophet disappears.

The surviving courtiers of Benhadad try to find a reason for the defeat of their king. They venture an old assertion, 'that the gods of Israel are but gods of the hills' (ver. 23). They propose a battle in the plain, but they have really wise advice to give nevertheless. In brief, they say, 'Take away the kings, and put captains in their places !' (ver. 24). What they really said was : 'Don't let us have ornamental soldiers for our leaders, but let us have men who have seen war !' Happy would it have been for many a nation if advisers so sage had always been listened to. In this case, however, these advisers left out one element, and that was the Lord God. Their king

follows their advice, and musters his army at Aphek, now Fîk, on the great eastern highroad to Damascus—the military road, really, between Israel and Syria. Fîk is in the Jaulan, about six miles to the east of the Sea of Galilee; north of it is a fine plain. It shows an increase of courage on the part of Israel that they go out to *meet* the invader, and do not wait till he attacks them at their capital. Aphek, in Bible times, was the most important place across the Sea of Galilee. Tiberias and Aphek (Fîk) are within sight of each other. Ancient authorities describe it as a 'large village,' or as 'a great castle.' Israel had but a tiny force to oppose the huge array of the Syrians. For seven days the armies watched each other, and on the seventh battle was joined; and because the Syrians had said that the Gods of Israel were but 'gods of the hill' (1 Kings xx. 23), they are shown that His arm was as powerful on this fertile plain. They are defeated with great slaughter, and the remnant flies to the city of Aphek, the walls of which city fell, and slew to the amount of 27,000 (Chap. xx. 30). It has been suggested that as this is a volcanic region, the fall of the wall may have been due to that cause, the fugitives being huddled up under the wall for protection; but no details are given. Benhadad fled into the city, and then from chamber to chamber while the pursuit was hot. The defeated king has clever servants, who, professing great submission, go to the King of Israel, who receives Benhadad; and we now hear that Israel had in the last reign lost cities to the Syrians. These are to be restored, and Ahab is to have some quarter of Damascus given him, and the Jewish king consents to these terms. A prophet, by an acted riddle, shows him how shortsighted his policy has been, and the victor goes back to Samaria heavy-hearted and much displeased.

Peace brings its troubles to Ahab as well as war. A restless, weak man, having kingdom and palaces, he yet craves for a

simple vineyard because it happens to be near his palace. He wants this vineyard for a garden of herbs, and when refused, like a spoilt child, this king takes to his bed, frets, sulks, and refuses food! What a picture the sacred historian draws in a few words! We know the sad story of Jezebel's crime and the murder of Naboth; and immediately the king hears of the murder he rises from his bed, and takes possession of his vineyard! Why should he so much value a vineyard? and why want a garden of herbs? One reason why Ahab liked to spend part of the year at Jezreel probably was that there, owing to the cool breezes sweeping across the plains of Esdraelon from the sea, it was a more agreeable residence than Samaria; as well as the other reason already suggested, that, owing to the level ground about, he could indulge in chariot-driving. This vineyard would be surrounded by a high wall, built of stone, with pleasant shade of olive and fig, pomegranate and vine, with tiny rills of rippling water, raised either from wells by artificial means, or from some strong spring brought by conduits to the place. The garden of herbs would be spikenard and saffrons, rosemary, and other scented plants, of which Easterns are so fond; and here in the shade the king longed to while away his hours. Jezreel, now called Zer'în, is situated just at the foot of Gilboa. The place is well supplied with water; there is a good spring called 'Ain Meiyiteh ('the spring of the dead woman'),* and a well called Bîr es Sûweid ('the blackish well') exists north of the town. Sir Charles Wilson estimates the number of cisterns found here to be quite three hundred. Rock-cut wine-presses are found to the east of the ruins, and it was on that side probably that the old vineyards existed. It could never have been a very large place, but the spur or knoll at the northern edge gives fine views in every direction. Numerous caves or storing-places for

* Note how the Arabic carries out the Bible story.

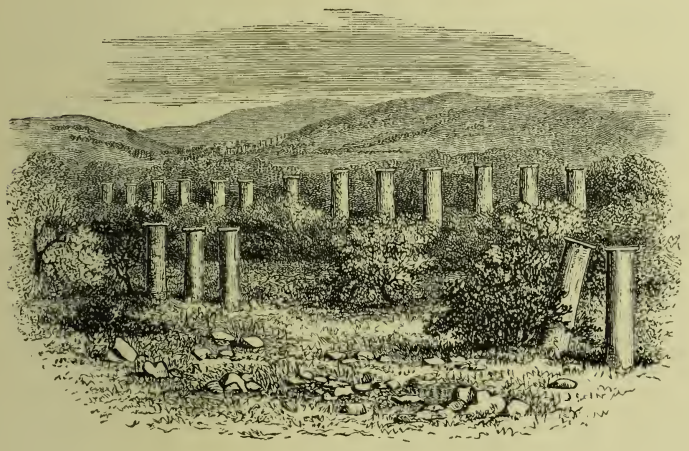
wheat exist, for, exposed as it was in early times to raids, the people hid their crops. It is a dreary spot now: mounds of rubbish, a few miserable huts, thickets of high, ugly thistles and rank weeds. Half-starved dogs were quarrelling over garbage when I was there, while never in my life did I experience such bloodthirsty flies and fleas! While sketching amongst these tumbledown huts, much to the disgust of my men, and amidst the growls of the few wretched women about, I stumbled quite by accident upon a fragment of antiquity. There was an open doorway, with upright lintels of stones with some almost-defaced carving on them. Entering the vault—for such it was, owing to the fact that a range of huts were built over the top—I found courses of large stones well chiselled. The place was used as a stable for oxen and goats, and was inches deep in filth. With the aid of candles, one saw that this vault extended for some distance under the heaps of rubbishy huts. An old Fellah became so angry at my intrusion, that, not being backed up by my men, who hated the filthy place, I was compelled to give up any further search.

Elijah pronounces a terrible doom for the guilty queen and king, and by the ramparts of the city, on the mounds outside the gate where offal was shot, this proud queen is to be eaten of dogs! Anything more degrading for an Eastern, and a queen, too—anything more dreadful than such a fate, it would be impossible to pronounce. And here again mark what a vacillating man Ahab was; he does believe the prophet, though he cannot bring his mind to serve the God of that prophet. He hugs his sins too hard; but now, with rent clothes and dust upon his head, he 'went softly.' No longer the high proud gait of a king, but the humble step of a sinner. And he receives a gracious message, that so far his repentance is accepted. The same story ever runs through the sacred page—the willingness of God to forgive; to the deepest sinner the way is open.

War continues between Syria and Israel—a campaign of three years. Then Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, wishing to heal the breach between the two Jewish kingdoms, visits Ahab, who sees his chance of wresting Ramoth Gilead from the King of Syria—that great stronghold across the Jordan — the key of the country. He therefore proposes a joint expedition, to which Jehoshaphat agrees, but is not satisfied unless a prophet of 'the Lord' is found. He evidently has no confidence in the priests of the calf-worship. Micaiah is named, Ahab adding, 'I hate him.' The false king had before this called Elijah 'his enemy.' Whoever reproved him for his sins he hated. The prophet is brought up from prison, and there in the open place or 'threshing-floor,' close to the gate of Samaria, sat the two kings in their royal robes—a picture of Eastern life, even of to-day, for this was to be a religious ceremony. This expedition was to be blessed by the priests of Baal. It recalls what the writer has witnessed in Cairo. There in the open space under the citadel, in a small wooden building, sat in raised chairs the late Khedive and his sons, surrounded by a glittering staff of officers and officials, consuls of foreign nations as well, while defiling in front went the procession of priests and dervishes and the sacred camel, bearing the carpet for the tomb of Mohammed at Mecca. So now in similar state sat these two kings. This 'open space' was that probably near 'the pool' and the now ruined Church of St. John at Sebŭstieh, the modern representative of Samaria; and now before them defile the 400 priests, one of whom was more officious or daring than the rest, for he is named Zedekiah. He was the son of Chenaanah, and had fixed horns of iron on his head, audaciously claiming for Ahab the prophecy of Deut. xxxiii. 17: 'His horns are the horns of the wild ox. With them shall he push the people, all of them.' Of all dangerous things a perverted

text is the worst and most misleading, and false priests have ever tried to wrest Scripture. Micaiah is brought before the court. He knows the falseness of Ahab's nature, and ironically he repeats the cry of the priests! But when adjured in the name of the Lord God, then he tells the king the truth, and relates the vision of the evil spirit. We see a similar strange story related of Job, how Satan is allowed to tempt men. The prophet is led back to prison, with orders from the king to the governor that his lot is to be made very bitter. The prophet appeals to the people, and is led away, and now again Ahab shows his cowardliness and guile. He is to be disguised, while his ally is to keep his robes. None but a coward would have suggested this, and his nature must have been well understood by the King of Syria, for he had given orders to his captains to bend all their energies to capture or kill Ahab only. The royal robes of Jehoshaphat soon attract attention, and these captains assail him, and he cries out. He cried out to God. His life is spared. The cowardly Ahab does not escape. An arrow, shot 'at a venture,' but directed surely by the hand of God, smote him in the chest, between the breast-plates. Immediately he requests his driver to carry him out of the battle, but in vain, for the combat increases in fury, and all that long day he is 'stayed up in his chariot,' his life-blood ebbing away. The battle was for the Syrians, and at sunset the host of Israel dissolves. The dead king is brought to Samaria; the town dogs, those filthy scavengers of Eastern cities, lick up his blood, as the chariot is being washed by the 'pool.' Of the old city of Ahab little or nothing remains, for the existing ruins are of that city afterwards built by Herod, but the steep approach is doubtless the same, and that great reservoir by the ruins of the Church of St. John is probably the very pool where the harlots were wont to wash themselves. The rows of columns so often described on this site have

nothing to do with the Samaria of Ahab ; they are the ruins of that city built by Herod, and called Sebŭstîeh. Of these columns there are more than one hundred. The hill is all terraced, and is 600 feet above the valleys which surround it. Rubbish abounds, showing how important the city once was. There is, however, one fragment of antiquity which most travellers overlook—remains of a tower or wall, built of large stones of rude masonry, the walls sloping inwards to give strength. This fragment looks westwards, and at sunset, sitting



SAMARIA.

at its base, you see the distant waters of the Great Sea, and the coast near Cæsarea. The ground is rich in mosaics, bits of which the writer has often picked up while walking over the fields. One of his men pointed out to him, close to his feet, a fine gem, a stone very beautifully engraved, with a Greek god upon it ; while the natives of the wretched village frequently brought him gems and curios they had found in ploughing. There are few places which would so well repay a thorough

exploration with the spade as this site, which, as a rule, travellers just ride through and then depart. The present inhabitants are rough and difficult to get on with, and carry out the character of its old inhabitants.

Ahab's 'ivory house' was probably a shrine or chamber to Baal. The Assyrian black obelisk mentions 'Ahab of Jezreel.' He, with Benhadad of Syria, had fought against Assyria. Their forces are given as 10,000 footmen and 2,000 chariots. They were defeated. At first sight this appears to contradict Scripture, as Benhadad there is spoken of as Ahab's enemy; but Benhadad had made 'a covenant' with Ahab, and probably the reason Ahab gave such easy terms of peace to Benhadad was that they were allied against the King of Assyria in those three years of peace between Israel and Syria of which we read. Then Syria probably made peace with Assyria, hence Ahab's anger with Benhadad. Jehoshaphat was a pious king, and sought to cleanse his land, especially from the foul sins of the cities of the plain. His fault was joining himself to the ungodly kings of Israel, who worshipped Baal at this time. A vassal king now reigned in Edom. The reason this remark is made is that Jehoshaphat built ships at Ezion-Geber. Had Edom been governed by an independent or native ruler, this would have been impossible, for Ezion-Geber was in the territory of Edom, close to Eloth, where Solomon's navy was built. The whole gulf is now called Akabah. The account in Second Chronicles gives us more details. The ships were broken by a storm, because Jehoshaphat had joined himself to Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, who inherited all the craft of his father. An offer to build a second navy was declined. The chapter closes with the death of the good King of Judah—who, happy fate for an Eastern, especially for a Jew—was buried in the city of David. It is to be hoped that some day these unknown tombs may be found. At

present many suggestions have been made as to the probable position. Nothing is yet proved.

There is an evil-doing king in Samaria, who follows the example of his father and mother in their sinful worship, and the book closes with the pregnant remark that his sins provoked the Lord God of Israel 'to anger.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

THE story of Ahaziah's life is continued. He has to face a rebellion, for Moab, across the Jordan, refuses to pay the tribute of lambs and rams. At this juncture the king falls from his lattice. We must remember that Eastern houses are entirely different in plan to Western. We often sacrifice the comfort of the inside of the house for the sake of its outward appearance. Easterns think nothing of the outside: the lattice window or balcony is the only thing which breaks the bareness of the plain walls outside. This lattice, made of crossed slats of wood, projects outwards, and gives air as well as affords to the inmates a view of the street or country. The 'upper chamber' would imply that it was from the harem, or women's compartment, that the king fell. He was so forgetful of God that he sends to Ekron—that Philistine town—to inquire of Baalzebub, 'the lord of flies' (that is, the god who was able to avert the plague of flies). A gem has been found in which the god is represented as a human figure with four wings like those of a fly. Sending to this god would imply that what Ahaziah feared was mortification of his body, and that he would be tormented with flies. His messengers are met by Elijah, and fear to go. Returning to the king, they tell him the message and his doom. Soldiers are sent, only to be destroyed by fire from heaven. Again, and the third time, the captain of the band averts the same fate, by

praying to Elijah to spare him and his men. Elijah then goes to the king, and personally delivers the word of Jehovah. From the history of kings and wars, the historian now turns aside to give us the history of the last days of Elijah and his servant, or follower, Elisha. The journey to Bethel follows. The sons of the prophets foretell that Elijah is to be taken away; it stays not their march. At Jericho the same thing happens. The faithful follower refuses to leave his beloved master, though the fifty prophets content themselves with watching 'afar off,' dreading that what is about to happen may involve themselves in some position of danger. Then follows the strange smiting of the waters, their division, and the two pass over; then come the chariots of fire. The mantle of the old prophet performs for his successor the same miracle, and the sons of the prophet acknowledge that he is the properly-appointed successor of the Tishbite. Still, they think it wise to search the barren mountains and valleys, which form such a barrier on the west of Jordan. So for three days fifty men search the ground. Finding nothing, they return to Jericho. The men of the city describe its position as 'pleasant,' but that the water 'is naught,' and so the land was 'barren.' Was this Jericho on the site of that old city destroyed by Joshua, and now represented by the mounds near the foot of the Judean hills? for it is there that the traditional spring issues forth. Or was it that modern Jericho, close to Erîha (the Jericho of the Crusades), where now the Russians have built an inn and some villas with gardens surrounding them, like an oasis in the plain, having repaired the ruined aqueduct which brought water in old days from that spring under the hill? Elisha went to the *spring-head*, and there cast in the salt which healed the waters. An inspired man, he went straight to the root of the evil, reformed that, and then the stream was pure. There are but two strong springs which

now issue from these hills; the one called 'Dûk' would seem to be too far off to be the one mentioned. The traditional spring is called by the Arabs ''Ain Sultân,' or the spring of the Sultan, and it brings life to the thirsty plain; for, remember, though the Jordan runs so near, that river fertilizes nothing. It in flood time only 'overflows its banks,' and does *not* overflow the country or plain as does the Nile. All cultivation depends on these two 'springs'—that of Dûk and 'Ain Sultân. At Bethel Elisha was insulted by the youths of the village. All Easterns call unmarried men 'children.' It shows how sparsely populated was the wild country near Bethel, that bears should be existing there. From Bethel, across the plain of Esdraelon, the prophet goes to Carmel, and thence returns to the capital city of Israel, Samaria. Israel still worshipped the calves of Egypt, though the fouler worship of the obelisk type of Baal had been destroyed. And now details are given of the revolt of Moab. So serious was this that the two sections of Jews for the moment joined hands. They felt too weak for a direct attack, and so went through the then tributary country of Edom, and its vassal king accompanied them in their circuitous march of seven days through his barren country. The host suffers greatly from want of water. Directed by God, Elisha tells them to make trenches, and promises they shall be filled. The command seems very cruel, that every fenced city is to be destroyed, every good tree, all fountains to be stopped, and all good land made worthless. Every Eastern invader seems to have acted on those lines, and one can see in Palestine to-day how well the Moslems and others carried out principles like these. Moab is defeated, and the order obeyed. And then follows a tragic story. In the last extremity the King of Moab offers his eldest son a burnt-offering to Chemosh on the walls of Kir-haraseth. This act roused his people to a final struggle against Israel, and 'they departed,' and 'returned

to their own land.' Reading between the lines, we can see that the confederate army failed to take the capital city of Moab, that they were really defeated in some sortie of the besieged. And now we can turn to one of the most valuable of modern discoveries. Kir-haraseth—now called Kerak—is situated in a country quite alpine. Deep gorges and precipices are everywhere. Its height above sea-level is 3,070 feet; the rock basalt. Wâdy Kerak has a precipice 1,800 feet deep. From the earliest times this strong position must have been selected as a fortress. It stands on a sort of peninsula, separated from the mainland except at the neck. Two wâdies, from 1,000 to 1,350 feet, with steeply scarped or rugged sides, flank it north and south. These unite about a mile to the west of the city. The platform on which Kerak is built is commanded by higher hills, for they are 3,400 feet. The size of the platform of the city, which is tolerably level, by nature or art, measures 800 to 1,000 yards on each face of the triangle. The wall has a smoothly-sloped facing, and fills up any irregularities in the native rock, which is scarped a considerable way down. There have been originally only two entrances to Kerak—one to the north-west, the other on the further side—and both entrances were *tunnels* in the side of the cliff, emerging on the platform of the town. To an enemy, Kerak is utterly inaccessible except by the winding paths at the western and north-east sides, and one road (the east) is cut to a great depth below the angle of the wall, so any enemy approaching by this rock-hewn ditch would be at the mercy of the garrison. Deep wells gave water, while huge reservoirs stored it. Fine springs exist in the valleys below. The distance of Kerak from Jerusalem is about fifty miles as the crow flies. This description, taken from Canon Tristram,* will enable the reader to understand the Bible statement that

* 'The Land of Moab,' pp. 65-78.

the slingers went about Kir-haraseth and 'smote it'; that is, from that higher ridge they might harass the people on the wall. But they could not take the city, so 'they left the stones thereof.' A history of these events, written by a Moabite historian, was found in 1868, for it was then that the famous 'Moabite Stone' was discovered. A series of most unfortunate blunders on the part of its discoverer (the Rev. F. A. Klein), with other causes, led the Arabs to attempt its destruction. They lit a fire under it, then threw cold water on it when it was red hot, and so smashed it into pieces. But a squeeze of the whole had before this been obtained by M. Ganneau; the fragments were, however, collected, some by French explorers, and others by the English, and finally very few pieces are missing. Some years ago the writer had the good fortune to attend a meeting of the Palestine Fund Committee, held in the Jerusalem Chamber, Westminster Abbey, when Dean Stanley proposed that, in the interests of Biblical knowledge, those fragments belonging to the Palestine Fund be given to the French Government, so that in the Louvre this priceless relic might be set up, and restored as far as possible. That resolution was carried, and small copies of this inscription can be obtained at the offices of the Fund. The number of letters on the stone was a little over 1,000, the number preserved 669; the probable date of the stone was about 900 B.C. According to the opinion of Count de Vogué, it was inscribed in the second year of the reign of Ahaz, King of Israel, so it is older than Homer, and is probably written in the same characters used by David in the Psalms, and by Solomon in his correspondence with Hiram, King of Tyre. The size of the stone was about three and a half feet by two feet. M. Ganneau and Dr. Ginsburg thus translate the inscription:

1. I am Mesha, son of Chemosh-gad, King of Moab, the Dibonite.

2. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I have reigned after my father.

3. And I have built this sanctuary for Chemosh, in Karchah, a sanctuary of

4. Salvation; for he saved me from all aggressors, and made me look upon all mine enemies with contempt.

5. Omri was King of Israel, and oppressed Moab during many days, and Chemosh was angry with his

6. Aggressions. His son succeeded him, and he also said: I will oppress Moab. In my days he said:

7. Let us go; and I will see my desire upon him and his house; and Israel said: I shall destroy it for ever. Now Omri took

8. The land of Medeba, and occupied it in his day, and in the days of his son, forty years; and Chemosh had mercy on it in my time.

9. And I built Baal-meon, and made therein the ditch; and I built Kiriathaim.

10. And the men of Gad dwelled in the country of Ataroth from ancient times, and the King of Israel fortified Ataroth.

11. I assaulted the wall and captured it, and killed all the warriors of the city,

12. For the well-pleasing of Chemosh and Moab; and I removed from it all the spoil, and offered it

13. Before Chemosh, in Kirjath; and I placed therein the men of Siran and the men of Mochrath.

14. And Chemosh said to me Go, take Nebo, against Israel; and I

15. Went in the night, and fought against it from the break of day till noon; and I took it,

16. And I killed in all seven thousand men; but I did not kill the women and

17. Maidens, for I devoted them to Ashtar-Chemosh ; and I took from it

18. The vessels of Jehovah, and I offered them before Chemosh, and the King of Israel fortified

19. Jahaz, and occupied it when he made war against me, and Chemosh drove him out before me. And

20. I took from Moab two hundred men in all, and placed them in Jahaz, and took it,

21. To annex it to Dibon. I built Karchah, the wall of the forest, and the wall

22. Of the hill. I have built its gates, and I have built its towers. I have

23. Built the palace of the king, and I made the prisons for the criminals within

24. The wall ; and there were no wells in the interior of the wall of Karchah. And I said to all the people :

25. Make you every man a well in his house. And I dug the ditch for Karchah with the chosen men of

26. Israel. I built Aroer, and I made the road across the Arnon.

27. I took Beth-Bamoth, for it was destroyed ; I built Bezer, for it was cut down

28. By the armed men of Dibon : for all Dibon was now loyal. And I reigned

29. From Bikran, which I added to my land ; and I built

30. Beth-Gamul, and Beth-Diblathaim, and Beth-Baalmeon, and I placed there the poor

31. People of the land. And as to Horonaim, the men of Edom dwelt therein, on the descent, from of old.

32. And Chemosh said to me: Go down, make war against Horonaim, and take it. And I assaulted it,

33. And I took it ; for Chemosh restored it in my days. Wherefore I made

34. . . . year . . . and I . . .

Briefly let us examine some of the statements of the Moabite stone.*

'Mesha is evidently the warrior king mentioned in the Second Book of Kings. At one time he was a vassal king to Israel. He liberated his country. He was contemporary with Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram, kings of Israel. After David's conquest of Moab the Jewish rulers treated the country with great severity. Moab, not larger than an English county, had to furnish a tribute of a hundred thousand rams, and one hundred thousand lambs with their wool.

'When Ahab was slain in battle, Mesha took advantage of the confusion, and rebelled.

'Ahaziah made no attempt to reconquer the land, but Jehoram formed the league already spoken of, and by the south end of the Dead Sea the confederate army marched to the attack. The Moabites met the invaders, but were driven back. The fugitives took refuge in Kir-haraseth, the frontier stronghold of Moab. We have already seen how the king tried to break through, and how he sacrificed his son. We note, too, that the King of Moab showed especial anger towards Edom. With seven hundred men he tried to break through to attack the King of Edom. Did he afterwards succeed? For Amos ii. 1 says: "For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the King of Edom into lime."

'We now see good reasons why the kings of Judah and Jerusalem did not make a direct attack. Moab had seized and fortified the towns on the northern frontier.

'Chemosh-gad: Chemosh was the god of Moab; Gad, the Canaanite god of fortune.

* Full details are given in the work by the Rev. James King, Lecturer for the Palestine Exploration Fund, 'Moab's Patriarchal Stone,' from which these extracts are taken.

'The Dibonite (the city Dibon), now Dhîbân, three miles north of the river Arnon. Mesha probably belonged to this place. So, probably, this was the reason this stone was set up there. Dibon is spoken of by the prophets as a high place, Dr. Tristram says: "Dibon is a twin city upon two adjacent knolls, the ruins covering not only the top, but the sides to their base.* The hills are limestone, not basalt (this shows the Moabite Stone was brought there, it being of basalt)."

'The erection of stones to commemorate victories was common. Samuel and David did so, the latter putting *up a memorial* when he returned from smiting the Syrians in the Valley of Salt. The meaning of Chemosh is unknown. Some identify him with Mars, others with Saturn. Ancient coins represent Chemosh as standing on a cippus between burning torches, holding a sword in the right, and a lance and shield in the left hand.

'Mesha then describes the cities he built, and the land that he recovered. A few may be mentioned:

'Karchah, sometimes called *Korcha*. The word means baldness. Isaiah and Jeremiah so apply the word. It is possible they had heard of this monument, and so made a play upon it. "On all their heads shall be *baldness*, and every beard cut off" (Isa. xv. 2). As much as to say: The King Mesha boasts of *Korcha*. The time will come when his subjects shall have *Korcha* (baldness) on all their heads.

'At Ipsambul, or Abu Simbal, Upper Egypt, some Moabite prisoners are represented. One or two have the hair shaven off, and whiskers cut off. Probably the royal citadel stood on a bare height near Dibon.

'*Omri* is mentioned as King of Israel. He was a successful warrior. It was he who bought the hill of Samaria. "His

* 'The Land of Moab,' pp. 132, 133.

son succeeded him," thus runs the inscription. We know it agrees with the Bible, for Ahab came to the throne.

'*Omri* took the land of Medeba ("quiet waters"), a town of great antiquity in Moab, mentioned in Num. xxi. It was a sanctuary of the Moabites in the days of Ahaz (see Isa. xv. 2). The ruins show that it was a place of great importance. Some columns are still standing. There is a huge reservoir; roads and streets can be traced; a hill near is full of caves; and there are also remains of a large temple.

'Baal-meon was built and its ditch made.

'This place is about two hours' distance from Medeba. It was a town of ancient Moab, and afterwards belonged to Reuben. In the days of Hezekiah it was a place of considerable importance, it being mentioned as one of the four towns forming the glory of Moab. The ruins are vast. Its name now, M'aîn, three miles south-west of Medeba. The ruins occupy four hills. There are foundations, lines of streets, old arches, wells and cisterns innumerable. Curious cave dwellings are near.

'Kiriathaim was builded.

'This town is two hours' march from Baal-meon. It was one of the ancient cities of Moab taken by Reuben, now called Kŭreiyât. Extensive ruins, but featureless. This was probably the place from which Balaam saw the tents of Israel.

'A statement is then made that the men of Gad dwelt in Ataroth, and in Numbers we read that Gad asked for the town of Ataroth. Here we have a wonderful confirmation of Bible statements. The King of Israel had fortified Ataroth, but Mesha took the town, put to death all the warriors; but the inhabitants, with the spoil, were offered to Chemosh. The present name is Attarus. There stones lie in heaps; lines of foundations, caverns, and circular cisterns.

'Siran and Mochrath are then mentioned. Siran is not to

be found in Scripture; it is, however, probably "Sibmah" of Joshua, also in the later prophets.

'Mochrath is not a Bible name, but its meaning is *morning*, and Shachrath means *dawn*. So it is probably the Zareth-shahar of Joshua (chap. xiii. 19).

'Nebo: a town of Moab, as well as a mountain in Moab.

'The women and maidens were not killed, but devoted to Ashtar-Chemosh.

'Ashtar was a Phœnician god, the masculine to Astarte. It is probable that Ashtar-Chemosh corresponds to the Greek Aphrodite, and the bearded Venus, Amathusia.

'"I took from it the vessels of Jehovah." Here we see that the sacred name of the true God was commonly known to the heathen.

'"The King of Israel fortified Jahaz." Here we see that Israel were successful. Why they left Jahaz does not appear; the site is unknown; it was probably in the highland plain.

'Mesha then says he built Karchah and Aroer.

'This latter place is represented by 'Ar'aîr, a desolate place with cisterns and wells, fulfilling the denunciation of the prophet Jeremiah (chap. xlviii. 19).

'Then he claims that he made a road across the Arnon. This river runs through a tremendous gorge. Traces of a Roman bridge are to be found, and other ruins.

'Beth-Bamoth does not occur in the Bible, but Jeroboam made a Beth-Bomoth ("a house of high places") (1 Kings xii. 31).

'Bezer: a town north of Moab. Bezer and its suburbs belonged to Reuben, and was one of the three cities of refuge across Jordan.

'Bikran was added to his land; the position is unknown.

'Beth-Diblathaim and Beth-Baalmeon are named as habitations where the poor were placed.

'The first-named means the "double house of figs," and is thought to be the Almon Diblathaim (Num. xxxiii. 46) of the Israelites, one of their last stations before crossing Jordan.

'Horonaim of Edom is then mentioned. This was a city of Moab, south of Arnon. It is spoken of by Jeremiah and Isaiah. It would seem that Mesha, having defeated the Israelites, now turned towards Edom, and was again successful.

'The inscriptions at this point are mutilated, and so the inscription on the Moabite Stone is brought to a conclusion.

'This inscribed stone is really 150 years older than any previously-known inscription, for the Assyrian tablets and coins date 750-650 B.C., while the Moabite Stone dates from 890 to 900 B.C.

'Ahab being slain by the Syrians gave Moab a chance. Mesha took that chance. His revolt was successful, and perfect harmony exists between the Bible and the stone. It is clear that though the Moabites were defeated at first, yet they gained the victory in the end. The very fact that Israel asked aid of Jehoshaphat, and that the united kings went such a long circuit, shows how powerful the revolt was. And the end is also clear, that the Israelites had to return to their own land *without* taking Kir-haraseth.

'In conclusion we may remark that the inscriptions on this stone make no mistake in the geography of the land.'

From the history of wars, and the deeds of kings, the Bible now gives an account of the doings of the prophet Elisha and some women. Women were despised in the East, yet in the Bible story we often find many great events hang upon their agency. Then we have the miracle of the oil, which pays the poor widow's debts, and following that the story of the rich woman of Shunem, a small village still existing on the Esdraelon

Plain, who presses her hospitality upon the prophet. Her husband agrees, and they build a small room on the wall.

This 'chamber on the wall' is a common thing of to-day—a tiny room, built out and supported by wooden struts; it is cool and quiet, being away from any noise of the house. Its furniture was then, as now, simple; little is wanted in that Eastern land of sunshine. The woman declines any court influence, but the prophet knows that she, like every Eastern woman, desires a son. He is promised. The promise seems too good to be true, for the woman says: 'Do not lie unto thy handmaiden.' The child is born. Years go on; he plays about in the fields at Shunem. And then at harvest-time in that open plain—no shelter then, and certainly not now—the child gets sunstroke. He has been with the reapers. He says, poor boy! 'My head, my head!' He is brought to his mother. On her knees till *noon* he lies, and then dies. Here is a great touch of truth: it is NOT the mid-day sun that is so dangerous, but the morning sun, or afternoon one, for then the sun, striking the nape of the neck, causes sunstroke—the mid-day sun strikes the top of the head, and is *not* dangerous. The mother asks for an ass and one man to go to Elisha. From Shunem you look westward across the plain of Esdraelon, and see the ridge of Carmel rising quite clear. It would be a ride of ten or twelve miles; and so, like an Eastern woman of to-day—the man-servant running behind the ass—the mother set out. She bids her servant slack not the speed, and the road being level, she would soon reach Carmel. The prophet sends his servant. The keen-eyed Elisha recognises the woman when afar off. The servant asks, 'Is it well?' and the answer comes, 'It is well.' Here custom remains just the same; an Eastern will to-day answer, 'It is well,' though in the next breath he will tell you of death. But when she got to the prophet all the mother's love went out, and in bitterness of soul she cast her-

self at Elisha's feet. He orders Gehazi off at once, with the command, If you meet any man, 'salute him not:' if any salute you, 'answer him not.' Why? Because all Eastern salutations are so very lengthy. The hands are clasped, the neck is kissed—first one side and then the other—and a long time passes in the congratulations and questions. It is no unusual thing for half an hour to be spent in this way. At the intercession of Elisha the child is restored to life. From Shunem the prophet went on his way, probably down the valley of Jezreel, and past Bethshean to Gilgal. An ignorant student had gathered some wild gourds, and put them in the pot of pottage, ignorant that these gourds were deadly. Those who have seen the Bedawîn of to-day gathering any scanty green thing to put in their pottage can easily understand how those delicious-looking gourds, the colocynth, growing to the vine which flourishes in the Jordan Valley, also in the Judean and Sinai deserts, would be taken as good for food. True, the Bedawîn know better than to eat this gourd. But this student was ignorant. While eating, the bitter taste told them of the mistake, and Elisha put meal in the pot, and they came to no harm.

Another miracle is then recorded: the twenty loaves of barley feed one hundred men. These loaves were probably just like the barley loaves eaten by Bedawîn of to-day, about the size of a woman's shut hand, hard as iron, and requiring to be pounded between stones, or soaked for days, before a Western can manage to eat them.

The story of Naaman, the Syrian soldier, is full of interest. We can but glance at the conduct of the little maid, which reflects honour both on Naaman's wife and the captive. For she must have been kindly treated, or she would not have felt so kindly disposed towards her master. Those who have seen leprosy in the East can understand what an awful scourge it is.

Those who have read of Father Damien can understand, too, how the will of a strong man can yet enable him to do his daily work. Naaman seems to have expected that the prophet would either mesmerize him (for he thought he would 'wave his hand over the place'),* or cure him at once by some other means. The story ends with the terrible punishment befalling Gehazi. One of the saddest sights of to-day are the lepers in Palestine. Thanks to Christian effort, they now do have better homes; but it is a living death. Then the miracle of the iron head of the axe follows, and now another invasion by Syria is projected. This 'war' must have been a series of raids; it is only through the insight of the prophet that the King of Israel saved himself from capture by those flying columns. Dothan, by a forced night-march, is surrounded by Syrian troops. Dothan still bears the Biblical name. It is very rich pasture-land—an upland plain. Tell Dôthân is a smooth hill, on which are ruins; at its base a fine spring. There are two wells; fragments of pottery. Dothan derives its name from 'well-pits,' or 'two wells.' An ancient road, with massive pavements, runs north and south. There are also numerous cisterns hewn out of the rock, bottle-shaped, with narrow neck or mouth. Dothan was on the highway from Gilead to Egypt, and still caravans pass this place. They go by Jezreel and enter Samaria by Wâdy Dôthân, and so on to Ramleh, to Gaza, and Egypt. The route is not so much used of late years. Since the opening of the Suez Canal the traffic between Syria and Egypt is carried on by the short water-way viâ Jaffa and Port Said. Even cattle are now sent from Jaffa to Alexandria in steamers, and so the old caravan route is becoming deserted. Then, too, the moving sands of the desert shore are fast destroying the road. One of the latest explorers of this route

* Or, 'strike his hand.' The margin reads, 'move up and down' (2 Kings v. 11).

was the late Crown Prince of Austria, who at one time thought it would be possible to construct a railway on the old road, but found the shifting sands would destroy it.

The prophet's servant was stricken with terror when he saw the armed host of the enemy, but his eyes being opened, he saw that the mountains were full of the hosts of God.

Blindness strikes the Syrians, who are led to Samaria, which is but twelve miles away. Then, their eyes being opened, they see that they are entrapped into the very heart of the land. By wise hospitality these enemies are converted into friends. They had eaten and drunk, and therefore Eastern custom forbade their attacking Israel, and so these '*bands*,' or raids, of Syrians came no more. The hill-passes round Dôthân show that they at one time were strongly fortified to protect the country from these Syrian raids.

Soon serious war follows, and the capital, Samaria, is besieged by the Syrians. The famine waxed sore. The 'kab of dove's dung' was, most probably, a name given to a small despised and cheap bean, to which was given the nickname of 'dove's dung,' from its shape, and which now fetched a huge price. The Hebrew word translated 'dove's dung' bears out this explanation. The terrible sufferings of the besieged people are shown in a sad story only equalled by one which Josephus tells of in the final siege of Jerusalem. The King of Israel, blind to his own sins, tries to lay all blame on Elisha, and his chief courtier, or prime minister, sneers at the hopeful prophecy, that the next day there will be such a profusion of corn that fine flour, as well as barley, will be cheap. The leprous men who sat at the entering in of the gate—*i.e.*, outside the city—discover the flight of the Syrians. Even to-day the traveller can see outside the gate the lepers sitting. Quite recently, at Jerusalem, this has been stopped, and an additional refuge for these afflicted people is built near the Siloam village.

The allusion to the Hittites shows that this nation was still existing even in those days, and it also shows how loose was the discipline of this army; indeed, all Eastern armies were but an armed mob or militia, judging from the monuments. The Egyptian armies, or parts of them, were trained to march in step and keep close formation.

The lepers return and shout to the guardians of the gate. After some debate two chariots are sent out to test the truth of the story, and the prophecy of the prophet comes true—the spoil is so great. And then out of the city pour the famished inhabitants till that captain who had charge of the gate is trodden down in the mad rush and crushed to death. That gate was, probably, near the ruins of the large Pool of Samaria —where the dogs licked the blood of Ahab—and one can picture the people rushing down the steep hill road to the Syrian camp. By the passes, and across the plain leading to the fords of Jordan, the Syrian host had fled, casting away everything that could impede their flight.

The Shunemite woman whose son Elisha had restored to life was now a widow, and the prophet, still mindful of her care for him, tells her of an approaching famine, and so for seven years she departs and sojourns on the lowlands of Philistia. This would show how partial the famine was. On her return she finds that, according to Eastern custom, her land had been confiscated by the village ruler. At this moment she sees the king in converse with Elisha's servant, for the king is curious to hear of all Elisha's deeds. This incident, again, is quite in accordance with all Eastern customs even to-day, for the very poorest can get access at times to royalty. When the king hears the widow's story, gratitude to the prophet induces him to order the restoration of her land, as well as all its past income. This trait of warm-hearted justice coming from such a bad king shows how faithfully the Bible

records were kept. Though it may seem strange to our ears that kings and nobles are represented as talking to servants and poor people, yet we must remember that books were unknown, and the daily papers had no existence, so the great ones of the earth were compelled by force of circumstance to get news by small-talk and gossip, just as the poor Arab of to-day depends on the talks over the camp-fire, or the chat in the bazaars.

So great now was Elisha's reputation that on his going to Damascus the sick King of Syria sends presents to him, and begs to know if his sickness is mortal. The name of the officer sent is Hazael. We see with what honour the prophet is treated, for this Hazael is the commander-in-chief, and he takes quite a royal present of forty camels and their loads to this poor prophet. Elisha saw from Hazael's face the black thought in his heart, for murder was seething there, and though he indignantly says: 'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?' (2 Kings viii. 13), yet he goes back, and with a wet cloth suffocates his royal master and usurps the throne.

The King of Judah had taken to wife the daughter of Ahab, and her evil influence kept him in the bad path of idol-worship. Joram has to face a rebellion in Edom. Moab had succeeded in casting off the yoke, thrust out their vassal king, and put a native prince upon the throne. Joram goes to Zair ('little'). The site is uncertain, though probably east of the Dead Sea. The Hebrew word much resembles Zoar. The invader was surrounded, but by a night attack he cut his way through; and that was all, for immediately his captain of chariots forsook him, as did the people, and Edom re-established her independence. While this trouble on the eastern frontier was going on, a new revolt breaks out in the west. Surely and steadily the empire founded by David is

breaking up, for Libnah ('whiteness') raises the standard of revolt.

Major Conder thinks Libnah is unknown. 'Arâk el Menshîyeh, a hill covered with ruins, six and a half miles west of Beit Jibrîn, is suggested by Canon Tristram. It is an important position, with some ruins and many cave dwellings. Joram is buried in the royal tombs.

Joram and Ahaziah tried to weld together the broken fragments of the Jewish kingdom by uniting their forces to attack the old enemy, the King of Syria—the usurper king, the murderer of his master. He, it appears, had come up to attack Ramoth-Gilead, that fortress which protected the frontier beyond Jordan. Joram is wounded in battle, and goes back to the summer palace at Jezreel, hoping to be restored to health; and his ally goes to visit him, leaving, it would seem, the armies in charge of Jehu. Elisha sends a young man to secretly anoint that captain as King of Israel. A fearful duty is cast upon him of avenging the blood of the servants of the Lord. When the soldiers are told, they make a hasty throne of their garments on the top of the stairs, and trumpets proclaim Jehu king. This military revolt shows that the army was disaffected, and probably chafing at the absence of the royal leaders. Giving commands that none are to leave the city, Jehu starts in his chariot up the valley from Bethshean. The watchmen of Jezreel see a company coming from the Jordan fords. The alarm is given, and horsemen sent out to inquire the news. They meet Jehu, and he refuses to reply to their questions, and haughtily they are told to go behind his array. The watchman on the tower reports to the king that he recognises the driving of the leading chariot to be that of Jehu, whose furious pace was well known. The invalid king and his ally, each in his chariot, go out to meet the company, eager for news. Egyptian and Assyrian sculptures enable us to picture

Jehu. He would be standing erect in his two-wheeled chariot, armed with the formidable bow carried by captains and kings, and when the usual Eastern salutation comes from Joram, 'Is it peace?' he answers, in truly Eastern custom, by another question, 'How can it be peace?' The King of Israel sees the danger, warns his ally, and tries to escape; but with full strength the arrow is discharged. Under his arms and through his heart goes the fatal shaft. We now see the retribution of Ahab's sin. Jehu and his captain, Bidkar, had both been in the bodyguard of Ahab when that king went down to Naboth's vineyard, and now these men, who had witnessed the crime, are the appointed agents in the retribution. And here, too, we see that Jezebel's and Ahab's crime had been even greater than the account in the First Book of Kings led us to expect. Not only had Naboth been slain, but all his sons, so that there never should be any question of descendants of Naboth claiming their own inheritance. The dead king is cast into the field of Naboth, while Jehu pursues Ahaziah, who had gained ground in the meantime; but in his excitement, though he had taken the *direct* road to Samaria and Jerusalem, yet there would only be the few miles of level driving between Jezreel and 'the way of the garden house'—that is, Jenîn, or En-gannim, which is situated at the southern edge of the great plain—really on the last spur of the hills which rise behind it—a lovely site now, where there is a thriving little town, a strong spring running through it, surrounded by pleasant gardens of orange and palm trees. From thence the road would be too steep for rapid chariot driving, so Ahaziah had to turn westwards along the edge of the plain; but 'in the ascent of Gur' ('the lion's whelp') he is overtaken and smitten. 'Gur' has not been identified; but it would seem that the chariot was overtaken where the rough hill country began. The wounded king is taken on to Megiddo. Nothing definite

in the Bible fixes this place; many guesses as to its position have been made. Dr. Robinson's and Canon Tristram's suggestions that Lejjûn is the true site fit in, I think, best with the Biblical account.* It must have been near Taanach. See Judg. v. 19: 'Then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo.' From other references to it we see that it commanded one of the gorges leading to the Sharon Plain. Now, at Lejjûn there is a small stream, ancient ruins, with large fragments of marble and granite sculptures. In short, Megiddo was the fortress of the western portion of the plain, and Ahaziah would naturally, finding he could not escape up the hills by En-gannim, seek to take refuge in that western fortress. He does reach it, only to die, and then in a chariot is taken to Jerusalem.

Jehu had returned to Jezreel. Jezebel — whose name, 'chaste,' belied her nature—haughty to the last, paints her eyes with the black antimony, 'kôhl,' used from the earliest times by Egyptian women, to give their eyes the almond shape so languishing and amorous; 'tired her head,' probably putting on a 'diadem' and a veil, which then, as now, is worn by Eastern women to conceal all the face except the eyes, and which veil, in the case of rich women or queens, is made of such fine muslin as really not to hide the face, and contrasting with the blackened eyebrows and eyelids, really makes an ordinary face appear beautiful. Did she hope even then to fire the heart of Jehu? The history of many an Eastern queen might lead her to hope that the conqueror would take her to wife, though her sharp tongue compared him to Zimri, who, successful in his revolt, had but a short reign of seven days. From her summer balcony on the palace wall looked down the queen. Jehu's only answer is, 'Who is on my side?'

* It is with great diffidence that I venture to doubt Major Conder's identification of Megiddo.

Two or three of her attendant eunuchs look out; the action was enough, and the order rang out, 'Throw her down!' Under the trampling of Jehu's chariot-horses the queen is crushed to death, while he goes into the palace to feast. What a savage picture, full of brutality! His feast over, he remembers she was a king's daughter, and orders her burial; but the wild dogs had eaten up the body except hands and feet—which beasts always refuse to eat—and the skull. Brutal, savage as the whole picture is, it is full of touches of truth; and not till all is over does Jehu recall the prophecy he had heard when captain of the guard, and see that the death of Jezebel was in accordance with the word of the Lord. A detailed account of Jehu's vengeance on Ahab's sons, and on the priests of Baal, follows, but on him was cast the spell of that Egyptian worship of Apis, which ever had such a fatal hold on Israel's rulers. He failed altogether to acknowledge the Lord God, and so judgments pressed upon the land. The decay of Israel's power is accelerated, and all the borders of Israel are ravaged by Hazael, of Syria. All the east of Jordan is smitten; Moab is lost, Edom is lost, and now all that fertile country east of the Sea of Galilee is at the mercy of the invader. Jehu is buried in Samaria. Elijah had said that Jehu and Elisha were to finish the work he had left undone. Strange combination! One was known as the man who drove furiously; the other had a double portion of his master's spirit. Jehu, a soldier, had a strong sense of right. He had heard the judgment pronounced on the house of Ahab, and when made king felt he was the one appointed to assert the justice of God. He esteemed himself 'a scourge of God,' and gave full play to all his bloody instincts; but nothing in the Bible is said to gloss over his ferocity. In the most brutal characters is often to be found a hatred of hypocrisy; but 'Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of God.' He swept away Baal worship, but clave

to calf worship, and so the nation went on its downward course.

The story of two women occupies the next chapter. Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, hearing of the death of her son, Ahaziah, and the other princes, moved by the lust of power, destroys all the seed royal. As queen-mother she had had sole power while Ahaziah had been absent at Jezreel, and, like her mother Jezebel, she hesitated at no steps—not even murder—to gain her ends. The sister of Ahaziah, Jehosheba—the only instance of a princess marrying a high-priest—saved the little prince Joash, and hid him and his nurse in a bedchamber of the palace six years. All this time the murderess reigned. Jehoiada, the high-priest, had meanwhile gained over all the captains of the guard, and when his plans were ripe, delivered over to them the shields of David and the spears, so as to connect the young prince with his great forefather; and then brought out the young lad, crowned him, anointed him, and placed him on a throne or platform, the people clapping their hands and shouting, 'God save the king!' The wicked queen had been quite ignorant of all. She saw the destruction of all her plots, and could only cry, 'Treason! treason!' forgetful that she had been guilty, and in the foulest manner, of treason, while this plot was but to restore the rightful heir. She is taken out of the temple and slain. The young king is brought to the palace, and sits on the throne of the kings. The people rejoice, and the city is quiet. Few rebellions were marked with so little bloodshed. Athaliah, like her mother—whom she so resembled—was slain at the walls of her palace.

At seven years of age, Jehoash began to reign. The good influence of the high-priest, Jehoiada, led him to be a righteous king for some years. He instituted a general subscription to repair the temple, and provided that the priests should not

spend the money on themselves. A money-box is made, and all moneys collected at stated times, which money went to pay the workmen, who are said to have 'dealt faithfully.' Hazael, that great captain, took Gath. This city and fortress was the key of Philistia east of the Egyptian road; so, to have reached this from Syria, Hazael must have crossed the Plain of Esdraelon, then through the passes to the lowlands of the seaboard. Then 'Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.' Therefore he must have turned from the west and, ascending the hill country of Judea, threatened the Holy City. Now Jehoash shows his want of faith in Jehovah. He buys off the invader by giving him the gold and 'hallowed things' in the house of the Lord. The bribe is taken; but his subjects, despising his weakness, slew him at Millo, the Tower of the City of David, which Solomon had repaired. Silla would be the valley below Millo. Amaziah, his son, succeeds him. In Israel the same sad story of Apis worship goes on, and Hazael oppresses that land. In his trouble, their king turns to Jehovah, and once more help is sent. 'A saviour' delivers Israel from the hands of the Syrians. Note, even now, how the people of Israel 'dwelt in their tents.' So ungrateful are they, however, that they still cling to the false worship. We can see to what an extremity the once proud nation is reduced when we read that they had only fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen. What a contrast to the days of David and Solomon! They had been trampled on like the dust of a threshing-floor.

In the next reign the fragile peace between Israel and Judah is broken, and then the story changes to the last days of the old prophet Elisha. He, sick unto death, is visited by the king, whose one thought is not of the dying man, but of the lost horsemen and chariots of Israel. Told to shoot arrows through the window, he shoots one. He is told it is the

arrow of victory, and that Syria shall be defeated at Aphek—that old battle-field across Jordan on the extreme frontier—so that the *capital* should not suffer the indignity of invasion and blockade. The weak king stays his hand too soon, and Syria is only to be defeated three times.

Older enemies, too, press on the border, for Moabite bands raid every year—probably at harvest time. And so till quite recently did the Bedawîn of Moab, whom the writer has seen foraging the fertile lands. A dead man is raised to life by being brought to Elisha's sepulchre and touching his bones. All these days Hazael makes war, and successful war, on Israel; and but for the compassion of God, would have destroyed them. But when the sceptre dropped out of the hands of this great captain, his son lost the cities his father had taken. Two words are pregnant with meaning. The Lord did not cast out Israel from His presence 'AS YET.' The doom was delayed; but it was coming with slow but sure footsteps. The wickedness of the people would bear fruit. It was their own lusts which destroyed them. We know the rise of this Hazael, who was such a bitter enemy of Israel, an instrument in the hands of Jehovah to punish that nation. So cruel was he that Amos i. 3 says: 'He threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron.' Doubtless the ruthless trampling of his horses and chariots is here meant. We meet with his name on a black marble obelisk now in the British Museum, which was found in Nimrud. On that Hazael, Benhadad, and Jehu of Israel are said to have been tributaries of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria. Jehu's tribute is spoken of: 'gold, pearls, precious oil.' In Assyrian monuments we read that Hazael led the Syrians in confederacy with the Hittites, Hamathites, and Phœnicians against Assyria, and that in the Anti-Libanus the Assyrian slew sixteen thousand of his warriors and took eleven hundred chariots. Three years after the Assyrians

invaded Syria, and Hazael submitted to them. Following this the Assyrian Empire had internal troubles, and then Hazael invaded Gilead, and held Israel in subjection—and later on, took Gath, 'setting his face' towards Jerusalem.

The son of Joash, Amaziah, now ascends the throne of Judah, twenty-five years old when he began his reign. It lasts for twenty-nine years; he follows the good example of his father; but the people are so wedded to false worship that they still sacrifice in the high-places. When he saw that his rule was settled, then he executed justice on the murderers of his father, and attempted to recover rule over Edom. In the Valley of Salt (the 'Arabah) he slew ten thousand of his foes, and by assault captured Sela, and changed its name to Joktheel ('subdued by God'). Here he acknowledges that this stronghold could only have fallen by the hand of Jehovah, for Sela ('the rock'), the ancient capital of Edom, was considered impregnable. Petra, such is its name now, is well known, though difficult of access, in consequence of the turbulence of the Bedawîn who inhabit the ruins. Professor Palmer was one of those fortunate enough to see it, and describes it thus:

'The mountains of Edom consist mainly of a range of porphyritic rock, which forms the backbone of the country. . . . The country is extremely fertile, and presents a favourable contrast to the sterile region on the opposite side of the 'Arabah. Goodly streams flow through the valleys, which are filled with trees and flowers, while on the uplands to the east rich pasture-lands and cornfields may everywhere be seen. With a peaceful and industrious population it might become one of the wealthiest, as it certainly is one of the most picturesque, countries in the world; and were there now as great facilities for transport as there were in ancient times, the power and commercial importance of Edom might be once more revived. . . . The gifts of nature are lavished in vain, and what little

corn the half-savage Fellahîn can produce serves scarcely any other purpose than to excite the cupidity of the Bedawîn. The inheritance of Esau, which was "the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above" (Gen. xxvii. 39), has become "a desolation" and a "curse." The first approach is by a small winding wâdy—the pass 1,400 feet, and the mountain 4,000 feet, above sea-level.' After describing in detail the approach, Palmer goes on: 'We entered the Sîk, a narrow passage about two miles long, which winds through the mountain between high and precipitous cliffs. Emerging from this, we come into a more open country amongst limestone hills. Here several tombs are excavated in the white limestone, and amongst them also are a few detached monolithic monuments resembling that known as the Tomb of Absalom at Jerusalem. . . . Night was bitterly cold. Camp 4,700 feet above sea-level. Severe storm of snow and sleet. There are some rude stone houses, a running stream and some cornfields, and then we come to the commencement of the rock-hewn tombs and dwellings of Petra.

'One excavation in the limestone is a temple with Corinthian columns. The scenery romantic and beautiful. A narrow passage runs between high perpendicular cliffs of the richest hue. This Sîk ravine is spanned by an arch, quite out of reach, which anciently carried an aqueduct from the heights above. Beneath your feet trickles a clear sparkling brook, and the whole entrance is filled with oleanders, while creepers hang in luxuriant green festoons from the walls. The more you advance, the narrower and grander the gorge becomes. Halfway down it on the left-hand side are some square cuttings in the wall, evidently intended for tablets. . . . Near the end of the Sîk, at the point where it takes a sharp turn, you come suddenly upon the Khazneh, which in beauty of form and colouring surpasses all the other tombs and temples. The

façade is of a deep but delicate rose colour, and that of the uncut rock around it varies from every shade of red to chocolate. In front is an open space filled with flowering oleanders, and covered with a carpet of soft green grass.'*

Many other tombs, temples, and inscriptions are described, one a 'Sinaitic inscription.' Ruined houses, and a fort on the top of a ravine overlooks the valley, apparently to defend the only part not protected by some difficult mountain pass. Passing on, the ravine widens, and you enter a street of dwellings, temples, and cisterns, all cut out of the rock, not so elaborate in their details as those in Wâdy Mûsa, but apparently of older date. At every point are staircases made in the small clefts, and sometimes in the face of the rock, most of them leading to platforms on 'high places,' designed for sacrificial purposes. The whole ravine is full of oleanders, and carpeted with the softest grass. It terminates abruptly in a narrow cleft, at the top of which is a temple. Some remains here are undoubtedly Horite.

Who that passes through this goodly but desolate land, and regards the vestiges of perished grandeur in these rock-hewn cities, can recall without emotion the solemn words of prophecy: 'Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rocks, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also Edom shall be a desolation: everyone that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof' (Jer. xlix. 16, 17).

The Sela of Amaziah's day probably did not have these grand temples; in fact, we know that many were erected long afterwards, but the ground was the same, and so no wonder the king attributed his success to God, and called the place

* 'The Desert of the Exodus,' vol. ii., pp. 430-470.

'Subdued by God,' which name it retained for eighty years longer.

Happy for him and for his people had he been content with this victory, for his forces must have been small. However, puffed up with pride, he sends a message of war to the King of Israel. (It is quite true that 2 Chron. xxv. enables us to understand what was the real cause of enmity between these two kings—but we must not anticipate.) Amaziah challenges the King of Israel 'to look one another in the face' (2 Kings xiv. 8). The King of Israel answers by a parable, in which he compares Judah to a thorn-bush, and his own kingdom to a cedar-tree. At Beth-shemesh, now 'Ain Shems (here once again we see how the meaning of the old Hebrew name is carried on by the Arabic: Beth-shemesh, 'house of the sun'; 'Ain Shems, 'the spring of the sun'), the armies met. Why Israel should attack at this place, which is twelve miles west of Jerusalem, on the low hills near the plain of Sharon, was probably because Israel felt that the north road to Judah was too hilly for chariots; therefore from Samaria the Israelite army would go through the passes on the lowlands to ground where chariots could act. Amaziah is defeated, and nothing appears to prevent the invader from marching up the hill-country to Jerusalem, which is captured, and the north-west portion of the wall broken down. This would be the wall nearest to the territory of Israel. The treasures of the house of the Lord are taken away. Hostages are also taken to Samaria, though Amaziah* must have been left as a vassal king, for we read that fifteen years after the King of Israel dies, and then Amaziah has to face an internal revolt; flying to Lachish, the most south-westerly town on the Philistine border. This is no safe refuge, and he is slain there. The dead body is said to have

* Josephus says that Joash compelled the people to open the gates of Jerusalem by threatening to kill Amaziah otherwise.

been brought 'upon horses,' not in a chariot, to Jerusalem, and buried in the Tombs of the Kings. Azariah, or Uzziah, has one gleam of success: he retakes Elath, that old station in Edom, near Ezion-Geber, now known as Akabah, and rebuilds the town.

Jeroboam II. of Samaria again makes Israel powerful, for he reconquers from the Syrians all that country from Hamath and Damascus to the Dead Sea; which is said to be in accordance with a prophecy of Jonah, the son of Amittai, of Gath-hepher ('the wine-press of the well'), now El Meshhed, two miles from Seffûrieh, the old Sepphoris. Why, or when, or to whom this prophecy was delivered we have no means of knowing. The book in the canon of the Old Testament which bears his name does not touch upon the condition of the kings or people of Israel. The story goes back to 'Uzziah,' or 'Azariah.' We are briefly told he was smitten with leprosy. Later on another historian gives the reason; here only the fact is related. The history of Samaria is then continued—a record of evil-doings, of plots, rebellions, and murder. The conspirator reigns one month, when he, too, is conspired against. From Tirzah, that 'pleasant' place, where Zimri burnt the palace, the new usurper Menahem goes up, takes the capital, Samaria, and crowns himself king. He, probably, had been commander-in-chief of the troops stationed at Tirzah, and may have marched from thence in the first place only desiring to avenge his master's death. Later on he smites Tiphsah. Was this the Tiphsah on the Euphrates, the border city on the north-eastern frontier in the days of Solomon? Or was it the 'Khŭrbet Tafsah,' six miles south-west of Shechem, suggested by Major Conder? It is difficult to believe that this new king was so powerful that he was at once enabled to overrun and recover all that territory between Tirzah and that extreme border city on the Euphrates, and the words of the

text would lead us to think that it must have been a city not far from Samaria. But, on the other hand, the invasion by Pul, King of Assyria, so quickly follows that able writers have suggested that Menahem neglected to apply for 'confirmation in his kingdom' to the Assyrian king (for the black obelisk before spoken of shows that Jehu paid tribute), and that this invasion was in answer to the attack on Tiphsah. Pul is the first Assyrian king mentioned in Scripture (about B.C. 770). He attempted to extend the Assyrian Empire westward, and had attacked Babylonia, Syria, and made repeated attempts to conquer Egypt. This last great empire was really the reason of all the after-attacks on Palestine, the Assyrians being compelled to take Palestine if they were to have their flank secure while marching to attack Egypt. Palestine was the Belgium of the Old World, just as the present was the 'cock-pit' of Europe in the last war of Napoleon the Great. Herodotus says Semiramis of Babylon was wife of Pul. 'No Assyrian records mention Pul. Berosus, however, mentions a Chaldæan king of that name reigning at this exact time. Asshur-Cush was King of Nineveh, but Pul being master of the Assyrian portions of the empire nearest to Palestine, the Jews called him "King of Assyria." Dr. G. Smith considered that Pul was the Babylon name of Tiglath Pileser, and the "Porus," in the astronomical canon, who began to reign at Babylon B.C. 731—the very year in which the cuneiform records date Tiglath Pileser's overthrow by Chinzir, King of Babylon, whom the canon makes the immediate predecessor of Porus (a name identical with Pul). The last year of Porus in the cuneiform canon is also the last year of Tiglath Pileser.'* Menahem pays a heavy tribute of 1,000 talents of silver to buy off the invader, and compels every wealthy man in Israel to contribute fifty shekels to make up the amount—a war-tax indeed!

* Canon Faussett, 'Bible Cyclopædia.'

Pekahiah, his son, succeeds to the throne, and has but a short reign of two years—a military revolt, headed by his commander-in-chief, slays him in his palace in Samaria. Two aides-de-camp remain faithful, as well as fifty men of his especial bodyguard—all Gileadites. How often do we find in the history of Israel that men from Gilead remained faithful to their trust when the fickle Israelites on this side Jordan changed with every wind that blew! In the reign of Pekah, son of Pekahiah, Tiglath Pileser, King of Assyria, came up. The list of towns conquered and the names of provinces show what a large extent of territory was now lost.

Ijon ('ruin')—its position in the hills of Naphtali, a store city—was captured in the days of Asa by Benhadad. The exact site is doubtful; El Khiâm has been suggested, north of Banias. The name is still preserved in a little plain near El Khîam, called Merj 'Ayûn ('the meadow of springs'). Abelbeth-Maacah, a city in the extreme north, was an important city, for it is said to have had 'many daughters'—*i.e.*, inhabitants (2 Sam. xx. 19), now called Abl, a village six and a half miles west of Baniâs; also called 'Abel on the Waters.' There is a good stream of water here, and some ruins on the top of a conical hill. The Derdârah from Ijon falls from the western slope of the mound, and from the mountain near gushes the powerful stream of Ruahîng. Janoah, now Yânûh, in the mountains of Naphtali. Then Kedesh, of Naphtali, a city of refuge; now the village of 'Kades,' west of Lake Huleh. The site is on a high ridge, jutting out from the western hills, well watered, surrounded by plains. There are ruins of a temple of the sun. The hill on which the buildings stand has an artificial appearance. It probably was partly levelled and filled out in places to make it regular. In the days of Josephus it was populous, hostile to the Jews, and fortified. The place is rich in

antiquities of all kinds; the tombs and sarcophagi are especially fine. Hazor ('enclosed'), now Jebel Hadîreh ('the mountain of the *fold*'), fortified by Solomon. A hill close by, now called Tell Hara, is found to be covered with ruins. Here are remains of an ancient fortress; a city with its walls and towers is still to be traced on the eastern slope; broken glass and pottery abound. This is probably the site of Hazor. Galilee, a 'circle' or 'circuit' around Kedesh, bounded on the west by Acre—*i.e.*, the plain of Acre to the foot of Carmel. The Jordan, the Sea of Galilee, Lake Huleh, and the spring at Dan, were the eastern border, while the northern reached from Dan westwards to Phœnicia. The southern border ran from the base of Carmel to Mount Gilboa, then to Bethshean to Jordan. It was divided into Upper and Lower Galilee.

Naphtali: Joshua calls it the 'hill country of Naphtali.' It is chiefly mountainous. 'The soil is rich, full of trees' (Josephus). Even now its forests and ever-varying scenery are amongst the finest in Palestine. At this moment the Arabs call it 'the land of good tidings.' It and Northern Israel was that part called 'Galilee of the Gentiles,' from the number of heathen inhabitants. The people of all these places were carried captives to Assyria.

This Tiglath Pileser is mentioned on two cylinders now in the British Museum. He was probably a usurper, as no mention is made of his father or ancestors. One old writer says he was originally a gardener. Assyrian inscriptions tell of the tribute paid to him by Menahem of Samaria; also by Ahaz. Then they go on to relate how he defeated a large army under Azariah (Uzziah); then that from twelve to fourteen years he warred with Pekah and Rezin;* that he besieged Rezin's capital for two years, at the end of which he took and slew him. He took Damascus, Syria, and Gilead,

* Josephus says Rezin took Elath, while Pekah besieged Jerusalem.

and the numerous slabs in his name show that he built a palace at the south-east corner of Nimrud. These slabs were intentionally defaced, and Esarhaddon used them in building his palace. Unheeding the fate of Israel, Judah still worshipped idols, and now Judah is attacked both by Syria and Israel, though the latter must have been a very weak state after the great loss of territory already spoken of. Another Ahaz comes to the throne of Judah. He plunges deep into all idolatry, even making his own son pass through the fire to Moloch. Every abomination is practised. Jerusalem is besieged, but not taken, though Elath is. One reading says 'the Syrians dwelt there,' while another says 'Edomites.' Troubles were on all the borders of the land; so now Ahaz sends an embassy to the King of Assyria asking for his assistance, and sends that king, as a subsidy, all the gold and silver from the House of the Lord, as well as all his own treasures. He gets the help he asks for. Damascus falls to the Assyrians, who carry the people off to Kir, and slay Rezin. Kir ('a wall') was in Armenia, on the river Kur, a stream which flows into the Caspian. It was from Kir that the Syrians originally came, and to this old region Tiglath Pileser removes them back. To Damascus Ahaz goes to pay homage to the conqueror. While there he sees an altar, and orders the priest Urijah to make one like it. The order is carried out, and on Ahaz returning to Jerusalem he offers sacrifices on this altar. Doubtless it was the Assyrian altar; moreover, it was a formal recognition of the gods of Assyria, which all subject-nations were required to put up as a token of submission. Tiglath Pileser in his inscriptions mentions that before he left Damascus all the subject-kings there made tribute and submission; and moreover, too, he mentions the names of Ahaz of Judah and Pekah. Ahaz cuts in pieces the vessels of the Temple to please the Assyrian king; and turns the 'covered place,' so

that all worshippers must 'go round' the Temple. Everything of Assyrian and Babylonian worship he imitates, even necromancy (Isa. viii. 19); every unlawful worship he follows eagerly, and, dying, is not buried in the royal tombs, but in the 'city' of David.

In Judah the famous Hezekiah reigns, but the story goes on with the fate of Israel. The new king there, unwarned by the loss of territory his father had suffered, offends the King of Assyria by not sending the usual yearly tribute; he increases his offence by secretly trying to get So, King of Egypt, to be his ally. He is taken captive and put in prison, while Samaria is besieged, taken, and Israel carried captive to Assyria. Thus ends the kingdom of Israel and its last king, Hoshea. 'So' of Egypt is the Shebek of the hieroglyphics. Sargon, in the Assyrian inscriptions, says: 'Samaria I looked at, I captured; 27,280 men (or families) who dwelt in it I carried away. I appointed a governor over them, and continued the tribute of the former people.' He adds that he transported prisoners from Babylon to the 'land of the Hittites.' This land was Samaria, and the inscription agrees with the Bible statement. The captives *from* Samaria are taken to Halah, a town of Media; to Habor, now called the Khabour. This river adjoins the Euphrates. On its banks the captives were located. The river Gozan, now called the Kizzel-Ozan, rises in Kurdistan, falls into the White River, and thence into the Caspian. The region through which it flows is most fertile. Then in full are details given of the sins of Israel, and their punishment, because the kings of Israel made the people 'sin a great sin.' Thus ends the northern kingdom of the Jews.

Then we are told of the people who are placed in Samaria from Babylon, from Cuthah—probably mountaineers from Chuzistan, the region between Elam and Media. Therefore the Samaritans were called Cuthæans by the Jews.

Avva : a town in Assyria.

Hamath : the valley of the Orontes.

Sepharvaim : this had been conquered by the Assyrians. The gods of these people had been worshipped by the Israelites. The town was built on both sides of the Euphrates (or the canal) ; hence it was called 'the two Sipparas.' 'Aim' marks the dual form. It was the seat of sun-worship. Then comes a curious story how lions devastated the country ; and these colonists say it is because they know not 'the manner' of the god of the land. A captive priest is sent to instruct them. He taught them how to *fear* the Lord ; but they made gods of their own (2 Kings xvii. 33).

Those from Babylon served Succoth-benoth, the Babylonian goddess of love.

Cuth-nergal : a human-headed lion with eagle's wings.

Hamath-Ashima (the idol of Hamath) : a goat with short hair ; the Egyptian form of Pan.

Avites made Nibhaz : which was a dog-headed human figure, like the Egyptian Anubis.

And also Tartak, which was worshipped under the form of an ass ; this god is supposed to be of Persian origin, meaning the Prince of Darkness.

The Sepharvites burnt their children to Adrammelech, 'the burning power of the king,' the male power of the Sun, while Anammelech was the female deity—gods similar to Moloch, of whom representations remain showing a human body with ox head, arms outstretched to receive the babe—the figure having previously been made red-hot. People are represented as beating drums to drown the screams of the unhappy victim. Such were the gods worshipped in the land where Jehovah at one time reigned !

Hezekiah begins with a thorough reformation. The high places, the pillars (obelisks or menhirs) are broken down ; the

Asherah *cut* down (showing that it was of wood); and then the brazen serpent made by Moses—which had become an object of worship—is broken in pieces, and called Nehushtan, 'a piece of brass.' See here a condemnation of relic worship! Hezekiah refuses to give tribute to Assyria, or to be his vassal. The Philistines felt his power, for he smote them even to Gaza, taking not only the outlying tower, but the citadel.

Then follows a recapitulation of the events which had happened in Samaria, and again the direct thread is taken up. A new Assyrian king has arisen. Sennacherib invades the land. The fortified cities fall before him. Hezekiah, alarmed, sends a humble embassy to the invader, who is at Lachish. This border city of Judah and Philistia being on the direct road to Egypt, shows that the Assyrian must have come by way of Sharon Plain, and that he was trying to clear his flank before attacking Egypt. Hezekiah sends large treasure, even cutting off the gold from the doorposts of the Temple. In vain, for with a large army two Assyrian officers come up to Jerusalem. Standing by the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field, the pool called 'Gihon,' within sight and hearing of Zion, and where now stands the citadel, under the very wall of which runs the old road, the officers called out and gave their haughty message. Tauntingly they ask, 'Why do you trust in Egypt? That power ever betrays any that trust in it.' This was truth. Rab-shakeh artfully suggests that the people of Jerusalem are not following the true God. He offers to make a wager on the part of his master with Hezekiah. The Assyrian will give 2,000 horses if the Jews can find men to ride them. When asked to speak in Aramaic, so that the Hebrews on the wall may not understand, Rab-shakeh replies that he is told to let all the people know what will befall them, and then he tries to excite a rebellion against Hezekiah, promising the inhabitants of Jerusalem that he will give them

a land in which they can live in peace, and riches; he relates how Sennacherib had conquered other lands, and asks in scornful accents how, if none of the gods of other nations could save them, shall 'the Lord deliver Jerusalem out of my hand'? A very subtle speech, full of ability, is concluded amidst profound silence, while the Jewish officers return to Hezekiah with rent clothes, in despair at the words they have heard.

That king, too, on receiving an account of this speech, rent his royal robes, and put on the garments of a pauper, sending the priests and scribes to inquire of Isaiah, who, in the name of the Lord, promises to send a 'blast' on the invader. The Assyrian orator returns to his master, who is now at Libnah, having taken Lachish. Libnah was in the low ground of Judah. Its site is unknown; it is thought to be a ruin-covered hill five miles north-west of Beit Jibrîn. Doubtless, Rab-shakeh took back with him the army he had arrayed before Jerusalem. We see, too, that the Assyrian king had been alarmed by the advance of the Tirhakeh—the Tehrak of the Egyptian monuments—who would naturally try to help Hezekiah, for all knew Egypt was the goal of these Assyrian invaders. They attacked Jerusalem because they dared not leave such a strong fortress on their flanks; hence, too, their attack on Lachish and Libnah. Sennacherib sends a haughty and argumentative letter to Hezekiah, who spreads it before the Lord in the Temple, whereupon Isaiah sends a message of comfort. Amidst the multitude of similes which this message contains, one shows that the houses of that time were much as they are now—'the grass on the house-tops,' which is soon withered. Poor houses are made with earth roofs, which are stamped and rolled down. When rain falls on them the grass grows up, to be burnt up as soon as the rainy season passes away. And then the warning, 'I will put my hook in thy

nose,' etc. This was no mere figure of speech, but a warning, that as the Assyrians did to captive nations, so they should be treated in turn by their conquerors. The slabs of Assyria show us very frequently captives dragged at the feet of a king or officer, who holds a cord in his hands, which is attached to a hook in the nose or lips of the captive! No arrow is to be shot at the Holy City, no shield or bank raised against it. This 'bank' was the common method of attacking a fortress, and all ancient sieges were conducted in the same fashion. A huge bank of earth and stones was constructed, so that from its summit arrows and stones could be shot over the wall and drive away the defenders there, while the wall was being undermined by the men who worked under their shields. That very night the Assyrian army was destroyed. This destruction, most probably, was at Libnah, for note the preceding promise (2 Kings xix. 32). It could not have been on that plain south of Jerusalem, called the Plain of Rephaim; possibly that might have been the camp of the Assyrian army under Rab-shakeh, but Sennacherib himself never came near the city.

What was it that destroyed the army? Egyptian priests told Herodotus that it was an army of mice. What says the Bible? Isa. xxxvii. 7 says God would 'send a blast* upon him.' Then we are told an angel or messenger smote the army. This messenger in the seventh verse is called a 'blast.' Jeremiah calls the 'blast' a 'destroying wind.' The Arabic version of the Scriptures says 'hot pestilential wind.' History is full of disasters to armies caused by this 'blast,' which is really what we call the 'simoon,' or 'Khamseen.' Cambyses' whole army was swallowed up by one. Ten thousand people died in one day in Cairo in 1696 from this wind, and in Constantinople in

* Among the Arabs cholera is called 'the yellow wind' or 'blast.' The Arabic word used corresponds exactly to the Hebrew word used in the passage in Jeremiah.—DR. CHAPLIN.

1714 300,000 people died of it; and camped down so near to the sandy coast of Philistia as Sennacherib was, the 'Khamseen' would blow with the greatest force. The late Crown Prince of Austria well describes the misery of travelling on that coast, so subject to these 'blasts.' We may note that in Egyptian signs the mouse signified 'ruin,' and it was this, probably, that misled the old historian. Hezekiah has a sore sickness, but a sign is given him that he will recover—the shadow on the sundial returning backwards ten steps.* This sundial was set up by Ahaz—a Babylonian method of measuring time, which Ahaz probably saw when he went to Damascus.

What did an Assyrian army look like? We can see from the Assyrian sculptures.

'The host is in array, for scouts in the van bring tidings of the approach of a hostile army from the southward. The light-armed troops are slingers and archers. They are dressed in short embroidered tunics, with their hair surrounded by bands. Like the Saxon bowmen, the archers draw their arrows to the ear. Their weapons are handsomely decorated. The heavy infantry carry spears and shields; on their heads they wear helmets of burnished brass. Cross-belts support small arms at the side, and shining discs of metal cover their breasts. They stand in regular ranks, file behind file. To-morrow, when the host of Judah makes its onset, the first rank kneeling, the

* 'The going back of the shadow on the dial has repeatedly been noticed, even in the present century. It is dependent not on astronomical, but on meteorological causes. . . . The shadow is not invariably dependent on the position of the sun, but upon the brightest point of light in the sky. If when the sun nears the western horizon a dark impenetrable cloud covers that orb, the shadow will be cast by the bright silver lining of the cloud, which may be near the zenith, and the shadow will repeat nearly a quarter of the circle. In the present century an instance is recorded by the Canon of Metz Cathedral. In the case under consideration, the object was the satisfaction of Hezekiah that the promise made to him was from God. The prophet is accordingly directed to foretell, as a sign, a natural phenomenon which was about to occur.'—BENJAMIN SCOTT, F.R.A.S.

second stooping, will form with their spears a bristling hedge, and from behind the bowmen will discharge their arrows. But the strength of the host is in the swarming cavalry and chariots. The horses are spirited steeds from Arabia and Armenia. The riders sit upon decorated saddles, clad in armour, with helmets and lances. The chariot bands are the chivalry and flower of Asshur. The coursers are caparisoned with purple silk and embroidered cloth; from their heads hang plumes and heavy tassels. As they hurry to and fro, flashing behind them with gold and jasper, with ivory and enamel, roll the formidable vehicles. The warriors within—the veterans of many wars—are clad from head to foot in steel. Embossed upon their shields are the heads of lions; lofty standards of precious stuffs, embroidered, hang over their plumed helmets; and all along the line hover pennons of scarlet. In the rear are the rams and other warlike engines, the ladders for escalading, the steel tools for the mines, already battered and blunt with hard service before the fenced cities of Judah. In tents of costly and gaudy stuffs, the concubines and eunuchs of the great king and the Ninevite nobles outnumber even the soldiers. Everywhere, from fertile Jericho to the sea-coast of old Philistia, range the foragers, and, innumerable as a locust swarm, the beasts, collected for burden and provision, consume the pastures. Here and there some great officer, the chief cupbearer, or the insolent Rab-shakeh, or perhaps even Sennacherib himself, goes by in his canopied chariot, attended by stately body-guards.*

Berodach-baladan of Babylon sends an embassy. He wishes to inquire of the great wonder of the sun-dial; but it was also because he, too, was a revolter against the Assyrian rule. He really wished to get Jerusalem and Egypt to join him. This view is fully borne out by inscriptions. It is difficult to understand how Hezekiah could have so much treasure to show

* 'The Story of the Nations': 'The Jews,' Hosmer, pp. 49, 52.

these foreign ambassadors after the huge sum he gave the Assyrian king. Various explanations have been offered. The captivity in Babylon is foretold, and the historian just glances at the public works of Hezekiah (of which we shall see more hereafter). And then a new king—son of this pious sovereign—comes to the throne, and, as it is so often even in these days, he is the direct opposite to his father. Everything that is said of Manasseh shows that he did more evil than all the kings who had gone before him : he was the Nero of Palestine, a worshipper of idols, and slayer of innocent blood. Dying a tyrant, he is buried in a garden. And so the sad record goes on—Jew fighting against Jew. They were up to the very last their own worst foes.

A little gleam of light only serves to make the darkness more profound. Josiah—a mere child—reigns. When twenty-six years old he wishes to restore the house of the Lord, and gives the necessary orders. And now a great sensation consequent on the discovery of a roll of the law. To such a depth had Israel fallen, that this one roll is hailed as so great a discovery. The scribe reads it. The king is appalled ; he rends his garments, seeing how far the nation had departed from the law of God ; seeing, too, that they held their land on conditions, none of which they had kept. They were to serve the Lord ; they had served idols : they were to love the Lord God ; they loved their own foul ways. The Magna Charta from God by which they held the land they for ages had broken in every particular ; and God could not lie ! Disaster and woe, destruction of the kingdom, and captivity of the nation must follow ; for Moses had foretold all that would come if they did evil. And they had done it. No wonder, then, that dismay reigned throughout all the court. 'Our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of the book.' They would read how in old times, when Israel was in extremity,

they sent to a woman—a prophetess, Deborah—and she showed them a way to deliverance. So now they send to a woman, Huldah, hoping for the same good fortune. In vain; she returns an answer forbidding any hope. The cup of iniquity is full. One only comfort is given that the king, because of his humility, is to die in peace.

The list of reformations wrought by Josiah only serves to show what a depth of iniquity Judah had wallowed in. Asherah burnt; high places destroyed; horses of the sun taken away, and chariots of the sun burnt; abominations without end cast out; the false priests slain; and a Passover kept, such as had never been known—all brought about by reading the roll of the law! But 'too late' was written by the finger of God. Generation after generation had sinned, and now the punishment was close at hand.

The disaster to the Assyrian army had encouraged Egypt, and years after it Pharaoh Necho delivers his counter-stroke. He, it appears, had no wish to attack Josiah, but that king, for some reason not given, tries to stop Necho, but in vain. At Megiddo, that old battlefield, he is slain; and again the curious expression comes in, 'when he had seen him.' The Judean army could not for a moment stand in open ground before those serried ranks of Egyptian archers, which are so frequently depicted on the monuments.

The son of Josiah has but a short reign of three months—sufficient to show the evil that was in him. When at Riblah, in Hamah, he is put in bonds, or chains, by Necho. Now, Riblah was on the highroad between Palestine and Babylon, and the place or headquarters of the Egyptian monarch. It is still called Ribleh—on the right bank of the Orontes, thirty miles north-east of Baalbec. Some few houses and other ruins, surrounded by a vast and fertile plain, make it an admirable camping-ground for a host. It is really a centre from which

roads diverge to the Euphrates, Nineveh, or by Palmyra to Babylon. The southern roads, leading to Lebanon, to Palestine, or Egypt, mark it as a fine strategic position. A huge fine is put on Judah; and the younger brother of Jehoahaz is put on the throne, bound as vassal to furnish all the Egyptian king demands, while the prisoner dies in Egypt. Once more the Israelites are under Egyptian bondage, soon to be replaced by one more bitter.

'But a day of the Lord was at hand for Pharaoh as well as for the kings of Judah.' Nebuchadnezzar then came up. The King of Judah becomes his servant; fickle, ever, he rebels. Then freebooting bands of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, Ammon, all gather round the dying 'lion of the tribe of Judah.' Herodotus speaks at this time of Scythian domination. All was anarchy; so waifs and strays of the different nations conquered by the Assyrians band together, and in time Nebuchadnezzar welds them into a new empire, for he is the conqueror of Egypt. At Carchemish the Egyptian king is routed, 'and the King of Egypt came not again any more out of his land' (2 Kings xxiv. 9).

An army detached by the King of Babylon now comes and besieges Jerusalem, the king of the invaders following later on. When he appears all go out and surrender—princes, warriors, craftsmen, all the chief men of the land. All are carried away—the poorest of the agricultural class only are left—the captives are transported to Babylon, and a new vassal king set up.

But a few short years of an evil reign, and then, blind to all the past, the king rebels against Babylon, whose army comes up, encamps, builds forts, and establishes a close blockade. Famine follows. Then a breach is made in the city wall, and the men of war 'fled by night' by a gate near the king's garden on the south-east side—probably the Dung Gate is meant. The king hoped to get to the 'Arabah, and so escape to Edom

and the desert; and though he did get as far as the plains of Jericho, yet he is overtaken, and carried to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar has his headquarters. There his two sons are slain, and his own eyes put out. Babylonian inscriptions show how this brutal act was done, for the pictures show a kneeling captive, arms bound behind his back, while in front stands the executioner holding in his hand an iron instrument with two prongs or forks, which when heated red-hot are thrust into the eyes of the victim. Such are the tender mercies of the heathen. The proud city has fallen. The inhabitants suffer every cruelty so common to conquered cities. The walls are made heaps of rubbish. Slaughter of old and young, and violation of women, take place in the upper city of Zion, as well as in the lower. We have but to read the Lamentations of Jeremiah to see what awful sufferings the inhabitants had to endure: 'For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water . . . my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed.'* Zedekiah, the last King of Judah, is carried captive to Babylon. A fickle, faithless, cowardly man, he had sworn by God to be faithful to Nebuchadnezzar. Had he kept his oath, he would have been secure on the vassal throne; but, puffed up, he leagues with Egypt. When the dread of Chaldean invasion is upon him he releases all his slaves and bondmen; when he has a hope of success he enslaves them again; and when he fled from Jerusalem it was with muffled face. His fate was dire. With eyes put out and in prison, he probably, too, had to do menial work.

Nebuzur-adan, 'captain of the guard,' is sent by the Babylonian king to burn the Temple, the palace, and all the great houses. The walls are broken down; the people are led captive, except the very poor, and they are the agricultural

* See the five chapters of Lamentations.

labourers. The Temple has been plundered of everything valuable before its destruction. The chief officers are taken to Riblah before the king; they are judged and put to death; and for the few who are left in the land Gedaliah is made governor. His father had saved Jeremiah from death, and he himself was a man who feared God. At Mizpeh he is stationed with a Chaldean guard. Confidence is restored; the poor of the land gather round him. Fugitives from Moab and Edom come to gather the summer fruits. He exhorts the people to be true to the Babylonian king. He recognises that it is indeed true that the word of the Lord has called that king 'my servant Nebuchadnezzar.' But Ishmael comes and eats bread with him. Gedaliah has been warned that this man has been sent to assassinate him. His noble nature cannot believe it. The traitor eats with him, and then, regardless of all faith, all tradition, slays his host—an infamous deed, especially to an Eastern. Fearing vengeance, the murderers take Jeremiah and fly into Egypt. It will be interesting to follow them. Jeremiah xli. gives full details. After the murder, Ishmael takes the people, '*even the king's daughters*' (Jer. xli. 10), and tries to escape to Ammon. The captives are rescued by Johanan, but Ishmael with eight men escapes to Ammon; fearing vengeance from Babylon, Johanan sets out for Egypt. The party halts at the 'habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem.' This would be the khan, or guest-house of Chimham, son of Barzillai, that old chief who had given David help when he fled from Absalom, and who was, on David's return, treated as a great friend by that king; so, evidently out of gratitude, David had given Chimham some of his own patrimony at Bethlehem. The grateful stranger in return builds a khan at the place, and the remnant of the Jewish people halt there. They hope to find a safe refuge in Egypt. They had carried Jeremiah with them, and that

prophet warns them that Egypt is no abiding refuge for them for that 'my servant Nebuchadnezzar' shall follow them there shall smite the land of Egypt, and 'burn the houses of the gods of Egypt with fire.' They listen not, but go to Tahpanhes. Jeremiah then takes great stones and hides them in the brick-kiln which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, telling the people that Nebuchadnezzar will erect his throne upon the very place where the stones are hid. Now, this Tahpanhes was on the north-east border of Egypt, easily reached from Bethlehem. What has modern discovery to say about this?

W. M. Flinders Petrie, that most able and fortunate of recent Egyptian explorers, thus relates the discovery of Tahpanhes, now called Defenneh, in 1888:*

'In the sandy desert bordering on Lake Menzaleh, some hours distant on the one hand from the cultivated Delta, and on the other hand from the Suez Canal, stand the ruins of the old frontier fortress of Tahpanhes, or Defenneh. That such a place should have been selected may seem strange at first sight, but it was the advanced post to guard the great highway into Syria; and when we look at the details of its position, the advantages of it are evident. All traffic taking the northern route by Kantara, which was more fertile and convenient than that by the Wâdy Tumilât, must have skirted the southern shore of Lake Menzaleh, or of the swampy and canalized region which may have occupied that site in ancient times. The edge of the desert was the only suitable route within reach of the Pelusic branch of the Nile for watering. This line is now the caravan road, and there can be no doubt but that men have gone down into Egypt along this line from the dawn of history. . . . The first evening that I arrived there I saw that the brick ruins in the midst of the plain were of a large building of the twenty-sixth dynasty, and I heard, to my surprise, that it

* See Egyptian Fund Reports.

was known as the "Kŭsr el Bint el Yehudi," or "The palace of the Jew's daughter." The earliest ruins found here are a part of the foundation of a building of red bricks, remaining beneath the pavement or platform in front of the entrance. In olden times Ionian troops were stationed there, in the line from which danger was most to be feared, namely, the highroad from Assyria. The settlement outside the camp is probably, then, the civil quarter, apart from the garrison in the camp, which would easily hold 20,000 men. From it Nekau made his great expedition against Assyria. Then, for the first time, did a body of Greeks come in contact with the Syrians and Babylonians, and the Jews must have heard in the speech of their conqueror's troops the tongue with which they were afterwards to become so familiar. The slaying of Josiah, the deposition of Jehoahaz, the setting up of the tributary Jehoiakim, and the removal of Jehoahaz into Egypt, marked the first period of intercourse between Jews and Greeks: "The children also of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head" (Jer. ii. 16).

'The intercourse, however, was soon to be increased. Three years later Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judea, and all who fled from the war would arrive at Tahpanhes in their flight into Egypt, and most likely stop there. . . . Such refugees would necessarily reach the frontier fort on the caravan road, and would there find a mixed and mainly foreign population—Greek, Phœnician and Egyptian. . . .

'The last and greatest migration to Tahpanhes is that fully recorded by Jeremiah. As these Jews were fugitive and rebellious subjects of Nebuchadnezzar's own kingdom, it is most probable that he would avenge their last rebellion and flight from Judea by taking captive all whom he could. This, indeed, was contemplated by Jeremiah: "Such as are for captivity to captivity" (xliii. 11).'

We may note the name. 'The palace of the Jew's daughter.'

No such name is known anywhere else in the whole of Egypt. This is the one town in Egypt to which the 'king's daughters' of Judah came, and probably this is the one building which would be allotted to royal persons who came with a large body of the more important inhabitants of Judea as political refugees. 'Jeremiah was told to take great stones and hide them in mortar in the brickwork (or pavement) which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes' (Jer. xliii. 9), etc. This brickwork, or pavement, at the entry of Pharaoh's house has long been a puzzle, but as soon as the plan of the palace began to be uncovered, the exactness of the description was manifest. A great open-air platform of brickwork was found, which W. M. Flinders Petrie describes in detail. Then a raised causeway was found six feet nine inches above the great pavement.* Here, doubtless, the ceremony described by Jeremiah took place. Some years before this, an Arab sold to the Bulak Museum three cylinders of terra-cotta, bearing an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, an ordinary text referring to his constructions in Babylon, such as would be used for foundation memorials. These were said to come from the Isthmus of Suez, and they apparently belong to some place where Nebuchadnezzar had 'set up his throne' and 'spread his royal pavilion.' As he only passed by the Syrian road, and Defenneh would be the only stopping-place on that road in the region of the isthmus, all the inferences point to them having come from Defenneh. Digging showed the place had been destroyed by fire; much pottery and many objects of the greatest interest were also found. One little trifle, to show how sudden must have been the destruction, was that in the kitchen a strainer was found with fish-bones still in it, also uncorked bottles of wine. W. M. Flinders Petrie's full account is most fascinating, and can

* Mr. Petrie suggests that some great stones he found buried under the pavement might be the actual 'great stones' mentioned in Jer. xliii. 9.

be read in the books published by the Egyptian Exploration Fund, an offshoot or sister society to the Palestine Exploration Fund. It is impossible to read his account without being filled with wonder and delight at the confirmation it affords of the prophecy of Jeremiah.

The captive king, Jehoiachin, whom Nebuchadnezzar had deposed in his first invasion of Judah, was existing in prison in Babylon while all these events had occurred. In prison he had made acquaintance and friendship with Evil-Merodach, who, during the seven years that Nebuchadnezzar had lived with the 'beasts,' was ruler over the land. When his father was restored to sanity he found that this son had exulted in the calamity of his father, so he was put in prison, and it was there he met the captive King of Judah. When Evil-Merodach came to the throne he remembered his fellow-prisoner, brought him out of prison, made him the chief of the captive kings of other nations who were in Babylon, and remained his friend to the end of his life.

We have traced now the Jews from Abraham—'God's friend'—through Jacob, and the captivity in Egypt; seen their deliverance through Moses; a conquering race under Joshua; a mighty kingdom under David and Solomon—seen how, through neglecting God, they split up, and step by step descended both in power and in every virtue that makes nations great, till it seems that no religion, no faith, is left in the mass of either rulers or people. A few steadfast souls hold up the torch of God and give warning after warning with no avail. The nation is given up to sin; the canker-worm of foul idolatry eats up the heart, and the race and city is swarthed in fire and blood. The Chronicles will give us more detail, and enable us to understand more fully some of the causes of this awful decline, but will not affect the facts of the rise and the fall. We will briefly press on to the conclusion.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

The book opens with a genealogical table beginning with Adam, and tracing the descents downwards. With that we have nothing to do, but will endeavour to identify the towns and districts named in the first eight chapters. Some names are passed because there is at present no clue to their position.

Commencing from chap. i. 43, we find Dinhabah, Bela's capital in Edom: not known.

Avith, the city of Bedad: not known.

Pai, or Pau: not known.

We then pass to chap. ii. 23.

Geshur ('a bridge'): part of Bashan; the north-east corner bordering on Syria.

Aram ('highlands'): the country from the Sea of Galilee to Euphrates, a north part of Mesopotamia.

The towns of Jair: Jair took the Argob, now called El Lejjah, and called the encampments after his own name.

Kenath, now Kŭnawât: a ruined town east of Bashan, on the west side of the Hauran Mountains. It overlooks a vast region, and is surrounded by a cluster of cities, all within a distance of from half an hour to two hours from it. Nothing could be more appropriate than the Biblical phrase, 'Kenath and her daughters.' The ravine here is deep. On the hill are ruins consisting of large bevelled stones. Some very fine

temples in partly ruinous condition. The number of ruined buildings of all kinds is very considerable. A fine antique head was here found. It is of colossal size, and was photographed by Dr. Selah Merrill*—probably a head of Astarte; and parts of an altar, in which the features of Baal and Astarte are finely cut. Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake secured this, and the fragment is now in England in the Anthropological Institute. On another fragment of an altar was carved a bullock's head; on the right side are a grape-leaf and a cluster of grapes. In the top of the bullock's head was a fire-box. This relic is now in America.

Caleb Ephratah: supposed to be the same as Bethlehem Ephratah.

Then ver. 55.

Jabez is not identified, but Deir Abu Kabus, between Eshtaol and Ashnah, has been suggested, in south of Judah.

The Tirathites: 'the singers.'

Shimeathites: 'those repeating in song what they have heard.'

Suchathites: 'dwellers in tents.'

The Kenites: a Midianite people. Jethro is called a prince of Midian. The present city Medinah appears to carry on the name of Midian. Jethro had his flocks kept by his daughters, and Arabs in the desert follow his example.

Zorathites: inhabitants of Zorah (?). Now Sur'ah, in the low hills.

The house of 'Rechab' ('wild'): 'Bedawy riders'—they were ascetics. Their rule against wine, against houses, sowing or planting, kept them from the idolatries of the Phœnicians. They were simply Arabs like the Wahabees, of whom Palgrave speaks.†

* 'East of Jordan,' pp. 40-42.

† 'Central Arabia,' Palgrave.

Then chap. iv. 14.

Valley of Charashim ('craftsmen'): Kh. Hirsha (?). The ruins twelve and a half miles south-east of Lydda.

Then ver. 19.

Maachathite: unknown; named with Zobath and Tob.

Joash and Seraph: unknown.

Jashubi-lehem: probably a place near Chozeba. Jerome says it was to it, or to Bethlehem, that Naomi and Ruth returned after the famine.

Then ver. 23 says: 'Potters and those that dwelt among plants and hedges.' R.V. says: 'The inhabitants of Netarim and Gederah;' the last word means 'sheepcote.' There is a village Jedîreh north of Jerusalem.

Moladah: one of the uttermost cities of Judah, towards the coast of Edom. Robinson thinks it Tell el Milh, thirteen miles east of Beersheba. There are ruins and two wells.

Hazar-Shual: not known.

Bilhah, also called Baalah: unknown.

Ezem and Tolad: unknown.

Bethuel: a suggested site is the small village of Beit Aula, five miles west of Halhul.

Hormah: the S'baita described in early chapters.

Ziklag: possibly 'Aslûj, a heap of ruins south of Beersheba.

Beth-Marcaboth ('house of the chariots'): not known, but in the extreme south of Judah.

Hazar-Susim ('the village of horses'): probably the ruin Susin on the caravan road to Egypt, ten miles south of Gaza.

Bethbiri: site unknown; a town of Simeon in the extreme south.

Shaaraim ('two gateways'): mentioned in the group of towns allotted to Judah as being in 'The Valley,' probably now the ruins of Saîreh, west of Beit 'Atâb (the rock Etam).*

* 'Names and Places,' G. Armstrong.

Etam: thought to be Urtâs, near Bethlehem. A spring near this is called 'Ain 'Atan.

Ain: thought to be the same as 'Ain Rimmon, but doubtful.

Tochen: unknown.

Ashan: thought to be represented by the ruins of 'Aseileh, three and a half miles from Rimmon.

'Entering in of Gedor': between Southern Judah and Mount Seir. The inhabitants, Bedawîn or Hamites, were destoyed by Simeonite chiefs, a body of whom went also to Mount Seir, the mountain range of Petra, and destroyed the Amalekites.

Chap. v. 8 then mentions Aroer and Nebo, and Baal-meon, all previously described.

Salcah, now Salkhad: a large town east of Bashan, standing on a hill, with a strong castle which commands the Euphrates road. The town and ruins are two to three miles in circumference.

Sharon: a synonym for the Mishor, east of Jordan; not to be confused with Plain of Sharon.

Hagarites, with Jetur, Naphish, and Nobab: in East Gilead, some branch of Ishmaelites, as seen from the great plunder of cattle.

'Baal-hermon, Senir, Mount Hermon,' these are but different words for the same mountain—Hermon.

Halah, a province. Habor, the river Khabour. 'Gozan,' the river Kizzil Ogan, which rises in Kurdistan.

Chap. vi. 57 mentions—

Libnah: unknown.

Jattir: now 'Attîr, ten miles south of Hebron.

Eshtemoa: now Semû'a, seven miles south of Hebron. A large stone (Hajr el Sakhâîn) stands on the north road to the village, a distance of 3,000 cubits—the Levitical extent of

suburbs and the boundary of the village possessions to this day.*

'Hilen,' or Holon: possibly Beit 'Alâm, in the mountains of Judah.

Debir: also called Kirjath Sepher.

Bethshemesh: described in previous chapters.

Geba: 'Jeb'a,' near Michmash.

Alemeth, now 'Almît: a ruined village, three and a half miles north-east of Jerusalem.

Anathoth: 'Anata, three miles north-east of Jerusalem.

Jezar: Tell Jezâr.

Jokmeam: not known; another name for Kibzaim (Joshua xxi. 22).

Gath Rimmon: not known.

Aner: possibly 'Ellar,' in the hills south-west of Plain of Esdraelon.

Bileam: the name still exists in Wâdy Bel'ameh, near Jenîn.

Golan, in Bashan: the name has been recovered in the Jaulân, where stands a large village. A stream runs west; the ruins extensive—one a ruin of a Crusading church. Dr. Merrill thinks Wâdy 'Allan represents the ancient Golan.† Golan was a city of refuge, east of Jordan; also a Levitical city.

Ashtaroth: a Levitical city (one of the capitals of King Og), thought to be Tell Ashtarah; a mound 1,551 feet above sea-level, 80 feet above the surrounding plain, which is very fertile. The base of the hill is large. There are remains of a wall; on the south-west some cyclopean remains, consisting of two lines formed of immense unhewn blocks of stone starting from a point in the plain about twenty-five yards from the base of the hill, running thence and up the side of the mound till they

* Canon Fausset, 'Bible Cyclopædia.'

† Dr. Merrill, 'East of Jordan,' p. 325.

meet the wall already mentioned around the summit, at the point in the plain where these walls commence. They turn towards each other at right angles, and space is left for a great gate. This may have been the entrance to a castle, and the massiveness of the entrance shows it was a place of unusual strength.*

Kadesh : possibly Tell Abu Kadeis, near Lejjûn, on the south-west of the Plain of Esdraelon.

Daberath : thought to be the present village of Debûrieh, under Mount Tabor.

Ramoth : now the village Râmeh, south of the Plain of Esdraelon.

Anem : probably the village 'Anîn, west of the Plain of Esdraelon.

Mashal : the name is preserved in Wâdy Maisleh, eight miles north-east of Acre ; many ruins about.

Abdon : now Kh. 'Abdeh, ten miles north of Acre.

Hukok : not identified. The village of 'Yerka,' eight and a half miles from Acre, is proposed by Van de Velde.

Rehob : not known.

Kedesh : in Galilee—'Kades.'

Hammon : the present ruins of Hima, eleven miles south-east of Tyre, are suggested, but two other sites close by have been also suggested.

Kirjathaim : the ruins of El Kŭreiyât, between Madeba and Dibon, are thought to represent it.

Rimmon : thought to be the En Rimmon of Nehemiah xi. 29 ; now Kh. Umm er Rŭmâmîn.

Tabor is then mentioned, after that the other side of Jordan.

Bezer : in the wilderness, unknown. One of the six cities of refuge. 'Kŭsr el Besheir,' near Dibon, is suggested by Professor Palmer.

* Schumacher, 'Across the Jordan,' p. 209.

Jahzah: unknown.

Kedemoth and Mephaath: both unknown.

Ramoth in Gilead: a strong city in Mount Gilead, apparently not far from the northern border; for it became the prey of the kings of Damascus in Solomon's time. Bashan was ruled by a governor who resided there; it is commonly thought to be Es Salt. But Major Conder points out that chariots were employed in a battle near this city (1 Kings xxii. 29-33), by an army which had come down the valley of Jezreel to encounter another army advancing from Damascus. Chariots could never have been driven over the rugged ridges of Jebel 'Ajlun. No general commanding chariots would attempt to reach Es Salt. The Jews consider Jerash to be the place. The ruins there are the most perfect, beautiful, and extensive east of Jordan. The ruins have been little disturbed; columns remain *in situ;* upwards of three hundred are still standing amid fallen temples and other splendid monuments. Its situation is beautiful, and lies on both sides of a stream which flows through the city from north to south. The main street is about one mile in length; a wall surrounded the city, and in many parts it is still quite perfect. The ruts worn by the chariot-wheels are still to be seen. The grandest temple is that of the Sun; its columns are forty feet high and six feet in diameter. It was a city of refuge.

Mahanaim: Mahneh has been suggested. Major Conder gives many reasons why he considers that site not satisfactory, and he thinks that 'on the plain east of Es Salt, where there is fine arable land,' the lost site will be found.*

Heshbon, now Hesbân: twenty miles east of Jordan. The ruins stand on a low hill, and are a mile in circuit; a shapeless mound of hewn stones, a great pool, a ruined fort, numerous caves, here exist. In Cant. vi. 13 the eyes of the Shulamite are

* 'Heth and Moab,' pp. 173-181.

likened to the 'fishpools of Heshbon,' by the gate of Bath-rabbim. The bright pools in the stream which runs beneath Hesbân on the west are probably intended. The plateau on the edge of which the city stands is reached from this stream by an ancient road, which at the top of the ascent passes through a sort of passage cut in the rocks, about ten feet high and four yards broad. This entry to the site is known as 'The Gates,' and these 'Gates,' looking down on the fishpools, may perhaps be those noticed in the 'Song of Songs' under the name of Bath-rabbim (chap. vii. 4) ('daughter of great ones'). A fine view to the south is obtained from the ruins.

Jazer: probably the large ruin, Beit Zer'ah, near Heshbon.

In chap. vii. 28 we note:

'Naaran': five miles north of Jericho are ruins of a town called Kh. el Aûjeh el Tahtâni, which are suggested as the site.

The other towns mentioned in this chapter have been spoken of in previous chapters.

Chap. viii. 6.

Manahath: probably the village Mâlhah, three miles south-west of Jerusalem.

Ono (ver. 12): now the village Kefr 'Ana, five miles north of Lydda.

Lod, often called Ludd: now Lydda, on the plain of Sharon near Ramleh and Jaffa.

Chap. ix. 2.

Nethinims, the word meaning 'given': they were servants in the Temple.

Shilonites (ver. 5): descendants of Shelah, Judah's youngest son.

Netophathites (ver. 16): inhabitants of Netophah; possibly the ruin Umm Toba, north of Bethlehem, and near the edge of the desert of Mar Saba.

Kohathites (ver. 32) ('assembly'): these were judges and rulers.

In chap. x. we get a detailed account of the battle between Saul and the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, which has been described in the First Book of Samuel.

Chap. xi. gives an account of the taking of Jebus, of David's many adventures, and a list of his guard.

Then a description is given of the warriors who came to David at Ziklag. There were bowmen, also expert slingers, able to use either hand. Then Gadite warriors who could use the sword and buckler. Such daring warriors were they, that when Jordan was in flood they swam the river. Here a touch of great accuracy ought to be noted. Speaking of Jordan, the text says, 'all his banks' were overflowed. It is usually said by travellers that there are but *two*. This is a mistake; there are three, and very distinct: first the bed of the river when low, then a bank when high, and a third bank when the river overflows, which is in the barley harvest, caused by the snow melting on Mount Hermon—so the river is highest in *hot* weather! It never overflows on to the Jordan Plain, as does the Nile, and the last 'bank' is a jungle of trees and bushes, in which hide wild boar and many other beasts, and these banks are frequented by clouds of water-fowl. Those who have stood on the banks of Jordan at flood-time can understand what strong, powerful swimmers these men of Gad must have been to cross such a rapid torrent as the river then is. Men of Benjamin and Judah go to the 'hold.' David is uncertain how these men of his own tribe will behave, but, like a brave man, goes out alone to meet them. If they are friends, well, his heart will be knit to them; if foes, he leaves his cause to God. Touched by his confidence and his bravery, Amasai, chief of the band, tells him they are friends. Others gather round him, till he has a host. Then follows a list of the

warriors who came to Hebron to make David king. We note that all are said to be 'men of war,' 'able to keep rank,' therefore drilled men. As usual with Easterns, a feast was proclaimed, which, again, as usual, lasted three days. It shows the piety of David at this time, that he at once consults how the ark is to be brought back. The story of its return is again related. The commencement of David's palaces, and how he got cedar timber from Hiram, is then related. Then follows the account of the festival, and the reception of the ark; a universal dole of meat, wine, and bread is given to every man and woman in Israel (1 Chron. xvi. 3, 'And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread and a good piece of flesh and a flagon of wine'), and David composes the 105th Psalm. Then, remembering that he, the king, is dwelling 'in an house of cedars,' and that the ark is still kept in a tent, David proposes to Nathan his idea that he ought to build a temple. He is, however, told that his son is to build 'an house.'

'Hiram was a great builder; "he hath built temples to Melkarth and Astarte or Ashtoreth, which he roofed with cedar cut from Lebanon." . . . Hiram saw it was best to be on good terms with David, so he sent an embassy to the Israelite king with a present of cedar-trees recently felled in Lebanon, and an offer of the services of numerous carpenters and masons to superintend the erection of the palace, and if need were, aid in its construction. . . . Phœnicia had at all times to be "nourished" in a great measure from Palestine (Acts xii. 20). Esdraelon and Sharon produced a superabundance of wheat and barley, whereof the natives were glad to dispose, and the highlands of Samaria and of Judah bore oil and wine far beyond the wants of their inhabitants: to Phœnicia it was a boon to obtain a market for her inexhaustible stores of timber, and it relieved her labour market to furnish her neighbour for

a number of years with an army of wood-cutters, stone-cutters, carpenters and masons. It was as skilled artisans that the Phœnician labourers were welcomed by the Israelitish king, whose subjects had small experience in those useful arts which Phœnicia had already for ages carried to a high state of perfection. . . . Hiram, the "master workman," was one of those universal geniuses who are common in the infancy of art and astonish later times by their manifold and versatile powers. It is not said that he drew out the plan of Solomon's temple, or that for his palace . . . but considering the total inexperience of the Israelites in architectural works of any pretension, and the fact that the Phœnicians had been long accustomed to build palaces and construct temples, it may at least be suspected that the builders employed by Solomon to adorn his capital with magnificent edifices drew their inspiration from Phœnician sources. . . . Altogether the Jewish temple, though modelled in some respects upon the "Tabernacle of the Congregation," must be regarded as essentially a Phœnician building, at once designed by Phœnicians and the work of Phœnician hands.'*

In chap. xviii. we have details of war. Hadarezer of Zobah is smitten. 'Seven thousand horsemen' are taken from him; the Second Book of Samuel says seven hundred. Edom is conquered. A silly prince of Ammon insults David's ambassadors, and then, seeing that war is inevitable, tries to get a huge army of chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia and Syria. They meet the advancing forces of David at Medeba, now called Medeba. Level plains stretch for miles. The ruins are on a hill. Lines of roads and streets are to be traced. There are ruins of a large temple, also a huge reservoir, of beautiful workmanship, built on the same principle as Solomon's pools. Details of the battle are given, and Israel is victorious. Rabbah is taken. David in an evil moment

* 'Phœnicia:' 'The Story of the Nations,' G. Rawlinson, pp. 91-98.

orders Joab to number the people; and though that old friend protests, he yet has to obey.* The number given of warriors is huge. Immediately it is done David sees his sin, and here his fine character comes in. When a choice is given him he says: 'Let me fall now into the hands of the Lord.' The story of Ornan and his threshing-floor is given, and preparations are made by David for the temple, which he is not to build because that 'thou hast shed blood abundantly.' A solemn charge to his son is then given, and details planned for the work and the temple services—arrangements also made by which the great levy of men and officers are to be guided in the face of all the people, their princes and officers. David explains all his desires; patterns of everything are given to Solomon, who is urged to be 'strong and of good courage'; and the First Book of Chronicles ends in a grand psalm of praise.

* In 1 Chron. xxi. 1 it is said, 'Satan provoked David to number Israel;' in 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, 'the Lord in anger moved David to number the people.' It would seem that the nation and the king, elated by their great conquests, thought that it was by their own power and might that victory came to them—they forgot the Lord. Hence their punishment—God *permitted* Satan to tempt David.

CHAPTER X.

THE SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

SOLOMON on his throne waxed great. There is nothing surprising at the sudden greatness of Israel under David and Solomon. Many a great Eastern empire has risen as quickly, and as quickly fallen. We see it even in our own day with the Mahdi. Solomon begins well. He gathers all the congregation to Gibeon, that high hill north of Jerusalem, to the tabernacle, the ark being still in a tent at Jerusalem. He asks for wisdom to judge the people, and his prayer is granted. Riches and honour are added; but the king's next step is a wrong one. He gathers chariots and horsemen—for which he gives a large price, buying them from Egypt—from Syria and from the Hittites (2 Chron. i. 17). The details of Temple building and modern discoveries have already been given in the First Book of Kings. His reign was one of great magnificence and splendour; but he exhausted the nation, who revolted at his death. Rehoboam, his son, had still that desire for building, and the cities of defence he erected are named. While he served the Lord he prospered; but, like his father, women were his bane (2 Chron. xi. 23). The punishment comes from Egypt: Shishak plunders Jerusalem. So when the Temple was but thirty years old it was plunderd. In the next reign war breaks out between the two sections of Israelites.

Abijah stands on Mount Zemaraim, which has not been

identified, and harangues the people. Jeroboam tries that old device of Israel, an ambuscade. But on Judah crying to the Lord, Israel is defeated; the historian adding that Judah was successful 'because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers.' Abijah follows the evil example of Solomon. His story is said to be written by Iddo, elsewhere called a 'seer,' who prophesied against Jeroboam. Tradition asserts that this 'seer' was 'the man of God' who denounced calf worship at Bethel. In Asa's reign the land is quiet, therefore the king proposes to the people that they should build 'cities' with 'walls,' 'towers,' 'gates,' and 'bars' (2 Chron. xiv. 7). This would prove that up to this date Judah had few 'cities,' properly so called. It will help us to understand the Old Testament more perfectly if we have clear ideas on this matter. Collections of houses were called 'villages,' or 'cities,' according as they were or were not surrounded by walls. Leviticus says houses 'which have no wall round about them shall be counted as the fields of the country' (chap. xxv. 31). In Esther (chap. ix. 18, 19), Jews of the villages that dwelt in the unwalled towns are distinguished from the Jews that were at Shushan. Towns were of two kinds: 'towns' proper, and the dependent towns, called 'daughters'—'Ekron with her daughters'; 'Ashdod with her daughters and her villages,' etc. 'Cities' and 'fenced cities.' The former had merely a boundary wall; while the latter had walls of great strength and height, and had gates and bars.

Villages were called in the early days 'Hazar,' and so Hazar-shual.

Towns were, as a rule, built on the summit of hills, as all ruins testify. They were surrounded by high walls, hence the expression 'walled up to heaven.' These fortified towns had parapets, bulwarks, or towers. They had especially strong towers at the gates. A watchman 'stood on the tower in

Jezreel' (2 Kings ix. 17); and Asa says (2 Chron. xiv. 7): 'Let us build these cities, and make about them walls and towers, gates and bars.' For additional security a ditch was made or cut of the rock outside the wall. Such a ditch can be seen at Jerusalem on the western side to-day. There it is scarped out of the rock.

Gates in Bashan were made of stone. Burckhardt speaks of Kuffer, where the gates of the town, nine or ten feet high, 'are of a single piece of stone.'

'Gates of brass' are spoken of, and also of iron. Acts xii. 10 relates, 'when they were past the first and second ward they came into the *iron gate* that leadeth into the city.' Now, this means that the large two-leaved wooden gate was entirely covered with brass or iron, which was riveted on the wood. This may be seen even now in many an Eastern city. Locks and bars were always of a massive character. The locks and bars to be seen to-day in many an old convent, as at Sinai, or in that strange Coptic quarter outside Old Cairo—a town in itself with wall and gates, each strong and massive, with bolts and bars, and *very* narrow streets—the whole enabling any visitor to understand what an Eastern 'fenced city' was in early times. Some of these 'streets' are so narrow that two people can barely pass.

Asa increases his army. Danger must have threatened. It comes now from the side of Egypt; but an Ethiopian king, Zerah, is mentioned as coming with a huge host. The invader comes to Mareshah—this was one of those cities on the edge of the hill country, facing and commanding the plain, though not actually on the plain. The most famous of these cities was that known to the Greeks as Eleutheropolis, now Beit Jibrîn, and a mile to the south of this is Khurbet Merash, the Mareshah spoken of. It commanded one of the passes, and was fortified by Rehoboam. Its ruins now are not extensive, as

the materials were used in building Beit Jibrîn. Rawlinson relates that at this time a king called Azerch-Amen reigned in Ethiopia. Others think it was Osorkon II., who reigned in right of his wife. He was probably an Ethiopian, and ruled over both Egypt and Ethiopia. The reason for the invasion was Asa refusing to continue the tribute Shishak had imposed on Rehoboam. The 'Valley of Zephathah,' where the armies met, is thought to be Wâdy Safieh—the leading valley, which passes Beit Jibrîn two and a half miles north-east of Mareshah. 'Asa cried unto the Lord.' His prayer was heard, the huge host was defeated, and the pursuit was so hot that they could not reform their array. Smitten to Gerar, twenty-six to thirty miles distant across the plain—Gerar now is represented by ruins called Umm Jerrar, six miles south of Gaza, a pastoral region—the fugitives took the direct sea-board route to Egypt. All the cities round about Gerar were smitten also. The region to this day abounds in ruins on the low hills which crop up from the plain. We see that it was a pastoral region, for sheep, camels, and tents in abundance were the spoil. Fine meadows still exist in the valley hereabouts. We find modern Bedawîn mud huts, and fields enclosed with mud walls, while here and there fragments of ancient pillars and some beautiful groups of palms are all that remain. The country is in the hands of the Terâbîn Bedawîn; their black tents now dot the landscape, over which range their numerous herds.

A prophet, Azariah, goes to meet the victorious king. He utters both a promise and a warning (chap. xv. 2). If they serve the Lord they shall prosper; if not, they shall be forsaken. All the past troubles of the nation are recalled. It was not possible to go in or out with peace. The king 'takes courage.' The idols are destroyed. At a great gathering he attempts a reformation of the people by *law*. Those who will not serve the Lord are to be put to death! His confidence in

God is but of short duration. The King of Israel builds Ramah, which commands the northern road, and in a fright Asa sends to the old enemy, Syria, to buy help. They weaken Israel on his further border; but Hanani, another prophet, might well recall to Asa's memory how, by trusting in God, he had been enabled to defeat the huge array of Ethiopians and Zubims (2 Chron. xvi. 8), and now he was afraid of his brother Israel. As usual, when a man has done wrong, and is reminded of it, he flies into a rage, and the 'seer' is put in prison, and some of the people—probably those who did trust in God—are oppressed. In great adversity and trial Asa was pious. Success ruined him. Stricken with illness, the chronicler relates that 'he sought not to the Lord,' 'but to the physicians'! The sacred writer evidently had a poor opinion of the doctors of that time. Asa's funeral appears to have been conducted on Egyptian principles, for we read of 'sweet odours' and 'spices,' and also note that 'apothecaries' were distinct from doctors or physicians.

Jehoshaphat 'strengthened himself against Israel.' This would be on his northern frontier—the cities on that side, which belonged to him, he garrisoned; and those cities Asa had taken from Ephraim he garrisoned also. In short, what he did was to fortify the passes north. A man of letters, he wishes to see knowledge increase; he therefore sends princes and Levites to teach the book of the law to the people. Here we have State religious instruction commanded; the king was blessed with peace. Philistines and Arabians bring him presents. He builds palaces, and cities of store for his armies. A volunteer corps is formed by several leaders, so that his armed force is great. And then comes the fall. He makes friendship with a bad and wicked man. A feast given by Ahab so influences him that he listens to a proposal to join hands. He is 'persuaded.' The outcome of this feast is that

the nation is dragged into war, and the man who has proposed this dangerous expedition is afraid of his own life, and coolly proposes that his guest shall take the post of danger. How infatuated was Jehoshaphat! The rest of the story has been told in the Second Book of Kings. Jehoshaphat goes back to his home in peace. His false and cowardly friend is dead. The king is met by a prophet, and, unlike his father Asa, he listens, and again he institutes a reformation. Judges are especially admonished, and told to remember that they represent the justice of God. Eastern judges have ever been open to the charge of venality; they are now warned to have no respect of persons, nor to take gifts. An ecclesiastical court is formed. A priest is to take cognizance of religious matters, and an officer of the king's household the other matters.

Chapter xx. relates how that Moab, Ammon and others now attack Judah—it would seem the 'others' were Syrians. This mixed host is assembled in the south, near Engedi, 'Ain Jîdy, in that district called Hŭsâseh ('pebbles'). Jehoshaphat, alarmed, proclaims a fast. All gather to ask help 'of the Lord.' No trust now in foreign armies. So complete is the gathering that even women and children are included. This would be novel, and not according to precedent. They are told to go to the 'cliff of Ziz,' or 'ascent,' or pass. The name Hazezon Tamar still survives in a valley called Hŭsâseh, a tableland near 'Ain Jîdy, at the 'end of the brook.' This 'ascent' would be by a watercourse which runs west. The 'wilderness of Jeruel' would be what is now called wilderness of Judea.

Near Tekoa, on the edge of the wilderness *south* of Jerusalem, the host of Israel is gathered—a religious host, who go out to war with songs of praise; and then immediately this hostile array of peoples, these invaders, who are strangers in custom and speech, disagree, and they, friends only in that

they wished to attack Judah, fight one another. History is full of similar cases. When Judah come to the watch-tower in the wilderness, they only see a field of slain. First Ammon and Moab quarrelled with those of Mount Seir, and when they had destroyed these, they quarrelled with one another. Their boasted band of unity proved to be a rope of sand. The watch-tower in the wilderness was doubtless one of those outlying towers which can to-day be seen in ruins in Bashan, where they exist in plenty. 'The circumference one yard from the base is sixty-eight feet. It has thirty-seven layers of stone in it; the one with the other would be about a foot high each. The walls are four feet thick; the height of the door is five feet five inches, and its width three feet three inches. A central column of cylindrical stones supports a stone loft of the height of fourteen feet, and a spiral staircase, the stones of which project from the wall and are much worn, ascends to the loft.' Such was the watch-tower in the wilderness. Great spoil is gathered; and then Judah assembles in the Valley of Berachah ('blessing'). Near Tekoa a wâdy called El 'Arrûb —an open, well-watered valley, well fitted for a large gathering —exists, and in this wâdy a ruin called Breikût; this is the suggested site. It is on the road from Bethlehem to Hebron. In the homeward triumphal march Jehoshaphat marches at the head of the people, praising God. They go to the Temple with sound of harp and trumpet; and so the realm has peace. That Jehoshaphat was well read in the books of Moses we see from the tenth verse of chap. xix., where he recalls the early history of Israel. He foolishly joins himself to the King of Israel, and together they plan a navy; but it was not to be successful because of the wicked ally, and therefore the ships are broken up by some storm, and the plan comes to an end.

The bright beam of success which lighted on Judah now gives place to gloom, for Jehoram, who succeeds to the throne,

had for wife a daughter of Ahab, who, like her father, was one who did evil in the eyes of the Lord. This new king had many brothers, and their father gave them portions. Revolt soon rears its head again. Restless Edom takes the field, and though Jehoram marches against them with all his chariots, yet they compass him about, and only by a desperate effort made at night is he able to break through the blockade. He for the moment saves his life; but the Edomite rebellion succeeds, as well as that of Libnah. He is warned that because of his sins he will suffer from a terrible disease, and the prophecy is fulfilled, and then trouble comes on the frontiers. The Philistines and the Arabians, joined with the Ethiopians, come up and take the palace, his sons, and his wives, and he dies in great suffering, unlamented. The history of the monuments shows us that the Philistines were allied to Egypt. Ahaziah, his youngest son, comes to the broken and plundered kingdom. As related in 2 Kings, chaps. viii. and ix., he is an ally of Jehoram in the attack on Ramoth Gilead. The historian lightly passes over the story of Jehu, and only notes that Ahaziah 'was hid in Samaria,' and there slain. 2 Kings ix. 27 says Megiddo, which place was in the kingdom of Samaria.

The escape of the child Joash follows, and the death of Athaliah, who, like her mother Jezebel, would appear to have been slain by horses; we now see the reason why a collection was made to restore the house of God: its treasures had been broken up and plundered to enrich the altars of Baalim. Sad that so good a beginning should end so sinfully, but no sooner is the high-priest dead, who was his great protector and adviser, than 'princes' give him bad advice, and groves and idols are worshipped again. Reproved by a 'seer,' the king orders the prophet to be stoned to death, which sin is done, and worse, for it is committed in the courts of the temple. Forgotten

were all the kind actions of the victim's father, who dies with these words on his lips: 'The Lord look upon it and requite it'; and before the year has closed a host of Syrians come up, capture the city, and take the nobles and their riches to Damascus. To show how truly this was the hand of God, the Syrian army was but a small body, and the greater host of Judah was delivered into their hands. These invaders leave the king upon his tottering throne; his servants conspire against him, and he is slain.

His successor slays the conspirators, but not their children, in this respect obeying the law of Moses. Wishing to recover Edom, he prepares for war, so gives a large sum of money to hire 100,000 warriors from Israel (2 Chron. xxv. 6); he, however, listens to the voice of a prophet, who tells him to trust in God alone. Then follows the account of the victory over Edom in the Valley of Salt. War is ever cruel, but these wars seem especially so. When we read of ten thousand captives being hurled from the rocks we shudder. And now the clue is given to the sudden enmity between Judah and Israel: those allies who were sent back were not satisfied with their wages; what they had hoped for was plunder, and plunder they would have, so on their return march they attacked and plundered the cities of Judah, their own ally. Bethhoron (2 Chron. xxv. 13) being mentioned shows that they went by that old road to the Sharon Plain, and from thence to Samaria. The fortresses of the north road were too strong for them. Blind, mad, the King of Judah must have been. He had conquered Edom by the power of God, and now, victorious, he worships the gods of Seir! A prophet is sent to rebuke him. He is answered with haughty insolence: 'Art thou made of the king's council?' With a parting warning of his coming fate, the prophet leaves him. He challenges the King of Israel, is utterly defeated, and Jerusalem again is plundered. With lost prestige he flies

to Lachish, but is slain by conspirators. Uzziah succeeds to the throne; he wages successful war. It is thought worthy of notice that he is able to break down the walls of Jabneh, now Yebnah, and of Ashdod (chap. xxvi. 6), the 'Azotus' of the New Testament, now Esdûd, a mere mud village of to-day. He fortifies cities about Ashdod, because it had a commanding position on the road to Egypt. The Philistines and Arabians, a mixed tribe, lived in Gur-Baal—a place lying between Palestine and the Arabian peninsula, which has not been identified—also the Mehunims, supposed to be the plural of Maon, in the wilderness, south of Jeshimon. The Ammonites, east of Jordan, give tribute even to the borderland of Egypt. His rule extends; he builds towers to the gates of Jerusalem; strengthens also *the* weak point of the wall—the *angle*. Towers in the desert he builds also to keep the wandering tribes there in check; digs wells for his cattle in the lowlands; his husbandmen and vine-dressers in the mountains are cared for; and here is a great touch of local truth, for crops and vines were best grown and cultivated on the ridges of the hill-country. Carmel especially ('the park'), that most fertile range—fertile then as now—receives his care. His soldiers are well armed; he has 'cunning men,' strangers, doubtless, who invent engines of war; the catapult for arrows and big stones is no stranger now; no longer do the sons of Judah propose, as in the days of David, to 'pull down' the walls of a city 'by ropes.' He is strong, and then he sins, for *he* went into the Temple to burn incense. The high-priest and the attendant priests bravely withstood him. It was for the sons of Aaron to sacrifice, not for the king. In great anger Uzziah persists, and immediately leprosy arises in his forehead. The priests, when they saw it, thrust him out. He was willing to go. This terrible disease still exists in Palestine. The writer, on one of his visits to Palestine, travelled in company with a

French medical man sent by his Government to study this appalling disease in the land of its birth. Many and curious were the facts collected; one must suffice. The English resident medical man told how that more than once some man would come to him who had been driven out with curses from his village, the inhabitants of which declared that he showed signs of leprosy. A medical examination of the closest nature failed to show any spot or blemish, and obtaining a certificate to that effect, the man would go back to his village, only to be driven out again by its residents, and ere long that man did show the leprous sign, and became a complete leper. What enabled those ignorant people to detect the very first signs of the disease none could tell. To this day certain cities are appointed in which lepers may dwell, and not far from Siloam village quite lately a row of cottages has been built by the charitable as homes for the sufferers. It is much to be regretted that they are allowed to marry, and so perpetuate this awful scourge.

This account of 2 Chronicles xxvi. 16-21 enables us to understand what in the account in 2 Kings xv. 3-5 is so mysterious. 'That he did right' and then that 'the Lord smote the king.' His son, Jotham, 'built the high gate of the house of the Lord, and on the wall of Ophel he built much.'

The wall in Ophel was doubtless part of the wall of the city in the time of Herod. Josephus relates that the old wall of Jerusalem, on reaching the place called Ophla (or Ophel), joined the eastern porch of the Temple. Sir Charles Warren, after sinking a great number of shafts, has arrived at the following facts:

A great wall still exists, though buried in rubbish, joining the Haram wall at the south-east angle. It was evidently built for purposes of fortification, for it is fourteen feet thick. As

the stones below a depth of thirty feet are not squared, and as this is the case all along, it is apparent that the wall was *not built till long* after the building of the sanctuary wall at the south-east angle. No sign of any gate was discovered. It is not built in the rock like the Haram wall, but on the hard layer of clay resting on the rock. The wall was traced (and a plan taken) for 700 feet from the first tower. It then terminated within a few feet of the surface in a rocky knoll, having been probably taken away in detail by the Fellahîn. There are several towers projecting from the wall, one of which is very remarkable, as it projects more than any of the rest, standing upon scarped rock, and having another wall leading from it going down towards the Kedron. It may possibly be the 'tower that lieth out.' It is also remarkable that many of the stones in this wall are polished, reminding us of the 'polished corners of the Temple.' Observe, too, that if all the rubbish were taken away there would be this great wall of Ophel, standing out above the valley *even now* forty feet to sixty feet high. Yet the upper stones of the wall do not appear to be *in situ*. The wall, then, is in its present form a reconstruction. Whose? It is more modern than the Haram wall. If Solomon built the latter, did Manasseh build this wall? If Agrippa, who built the Ophel wall? Some remains of a great wall were also found, leading apparently to the eastern jamb of the Triple Gate, which Sir Charles Warren thinks may have been a recess running from the Ophel wall. On the slope of the Ophel hill a great many curious things were come across. Among these were lamps, a good deal of pottery, stone weights, dishes, etc. Here, too, was found a very curious little seal, with the Hebrew inscription, 'Haggai, the son of Shebaniah:'* its date may be *possibly* 500 B.C.

* Copies of this seal can be obtained at the offices of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

A cavern was found in this hill, in which was a copper lamp-stand, perhaps of the Byzantine period. The cavern is cut out of the rock, and consists of two chambers. Round one of them are cut vats, mangers, or troughs. It was last used for a stable, but as the earth was eleven feet deep, it is obvious that this was not its original purpose, and it is more likely to have been, as Sir Charles Warren suggests, a fuller's shop. Tradition tells us St. James was thrown from the outer wall at the Temple enclosure, and that a 'fuller took the club with which he pressed the clothes, and brought it down on the head of the just one.' In the earth above the cave is a drain which is, of course, more modern than the cave. Here were found glass and pottery, supposed to be early Christian. This takes us, for the antiquity of the 'fuller's shop,' a very long time back.*

Chap. xxvii. relates that 'cities also in the mountains, and in the forests castles and towers, were built.' These strongholds were doubtless erected to command the passes. For three years the Ammonites pay heavy tribute, for he waged successful war against them.

Then we get more details of the new king, Ahaz, who forsakes the Lord and worships the foul idols of the heathen. He offers sacrifice in Hinnom, burns his children to Moloch ;†

* 'Our Work in Palestine,' pp. 144, 147.

† '*The principal sacrifice was children.* This horrible custom was grounded in part on the notion that children were the dearest possession of their parents, and in part that, as pure and innocent beings, they were the offerings of atonement most certain to pacify the anger of the Deity. . . . The image of metal was made hot by a fire kindled within it, and the children, laid in its arms, rolled from thence into the fiery lap below. The parents stopped the cries of their children by fondling and kissing them, for the victim ought not to weep, and the sound of complaint was drowned in the din of flutes and kettledrums. Mothers, according to Plutarch, stood by without tears or sobs ; if they wept or sobbed they lost the honour of the act, and their children were sacrificed notwithstanding. . . . The pure cult of Judaism—the one hope of the world—contracted a well-nigh indelible stain from the proselytizing efforts of Jezebel and Athaliah, and their furious

and so a judgment comes upon him. The agent chosen is Syria. Then the King of Israel destroys his army, and carries to Samaria spoil and a vast body of captives. There is still, however, a body of men in Israel who grieve over this internecine war. A prophet makes a touching appeal to the people (chap. xxviii. 12-15), and to the popular voice the army is obliged to submit. The captives are clothed, shod, and fed, taken to Jericho, then released. Probably this was because Jericho, far east, had escaped the invasion, and also because it would be so easily reached from Samaria, either by going along the Jordan Plain, or at Bethshean, crossing the easy fords and going along the eastern bank, recrossing at the Jericho fords. Anyhow, the captives would be spared the harassing march through the hill-country on the north road.

Edom from the south-east, Philistines from the west, seize the opportunity to invade Judah. The latter take some cities in the low country, the well-known Beth-Shemesh, Ajalon, and Gederoth ('sheepcotes'). Tristram suggests the modern Guderak, two miles south-east of Ekron. Conder suggests Katrah. Shocho and its villages, thought to be Khŭrbet Shuweikeh, on the brink of the Valley of Elah. Timnah, now Tibnah, where there are ruins, south of the Valley of Sorek. Gimzo and its villages, now Jimzu, a mud village on the side of a low hill, just at the entrance into the plain east of Lydda. On the east side are cisterns; on the west, by the roadside, a well. It is surrounded by olive and cactus hedges. Israel is now brought very low. Tiglath Pileser is no real help, though he accepts great treasure. Fatally blind, Ahaz thinks that

persecutions: the heavenly light passed under a thick black cloud, and it required prolonged convulsions through the whole of the East, the downfall of Israel and Judah, and the long purgation of the Captivity, to undo the effects brought about "with a light heart" by a royal bigot and his cruel daughter and grand-daughter.'—G. Rawlinson, 'Story of the Nations,' pp. 113, 114, 117.

because Syria is so successful it must be its gods! So he sacrifices to them also, thinking they will help him. The act ruined him and the kingdom of Israel.

Once more a good king comes to the throne, and light breaks out. The nation is strengthened, for Hezekiah sets out in real earnest to effect a reformation. He tells his people plainly that because of the sins of their fathers and their own they have 'trouble' and are a 'hissing.' Their fathers have fallen by the sword; their own wives, their sons and daughters, are in captivity. He appeals to them to sanctify themselves. They sing praises with gladness and worship, but the priests are found too few! The nation that had been the especial favourite of Jehovah now has too few priests who know how to worship Him! Hezekiah now seeks to reweld the broken fragments of the empire. He sends proclamations to all Israel, begging them to come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, and pray that God in His mercy may turn away the evils from their land. This pious effort is only laughed to scorn, and the rulers of Israel, blind to the signs of the times, see in this religious effort but a political device to join the peoples together. The opposing tribes cannot sink their own private greeds for the general welfare, and but few accept the call. No spirit of devotion to Jehovah, no national patriotism, exist, and the one last chance of a regeneration of the nation slips away. The dreaded invader comes. Sennacherib attacks the fenced cities. The delay gives Hezekiah breathing-time. With wise forethought he knows that a large invading army cannot exist outside Jerusalem if water—that all-potent factor in the East—is denied it. Taking counsel of his princes and mighty men, they stop the waters of the fountains outside the city walls, and especially 'the brook that ran through the midst of the land.' The marginal reading is most important, 'the brook *that overflowed*.' Here I will quote the Rev. W. F. Birch.

'Heavy rain would make a stream in any valley, but in this case why stop only one? Now, the Virgin's Fount in the Kidron Valley is partly an intermittent spring; it overflows at irregular intervals. The recent discovery of Schick's aqueduct, which carried these waters to the mouth of the Tyropœon Valley, showed, however, that the waters from Gihon, even in the time of Ahaz, were not allowed to overflow down the Kidron, while the flowing along the aqueduct certainly did not answer to flowing "through the midst of the land." Nevertheless the brook has been overflowing almost every year. Major Conder says* (under head Bîr Eyûb): "The rising of the waters is held as a feast by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who may be seen walking beside the water, or sitting in the valley in numbers on a bright winter day when the water is flowing." After heavy rains the water from the lower strata of rock finds an outlet up the shaft of the well. Sir Charles Warren discovered one entrance to three staircases, a little north of the well, one of them leading to a semi-natural cistern in the rock, where a natural cleft was also visible. This staircase had evidently been cut into at a later date, but in its original form it had once been built up by a cross-wall, and at the bottom of the wall a hole or duct was left six and three-eighths by four inches, and on the northern side a stone plug to fit, and twelve inches long, was found in it. Why? Here is the VERY PLUG Hezekiah put in when Sennacherib invaded Judah. Talk of the Bible not bearing historical criticism! Afterwards the *plug* was no longer needed, when the 1,800 feet aqueduct from the cistern was made down the Kidron.

'It seems to me that the above staircases must have been made by the Jebusites, and that this source of water is to be identified with En-rogel. Dr. Thomson† points out the fittest

* 'Memoirs, Jerusalem,' p. 371.

† 'The Land and the Book,' pp. 658, 659.

place and time for Adonijah's conspiracy, viz., near Joab's Well, when the *brook* was overflowing, so that the holiday-makers there would find themselves entrapped into the rebellion ere they were aware of it.'*

Three sites have been proposed: (1) The Virgin's Fount, *i.e.*, Gihon; (2) The Pool of Siloam; (3) Joab's Well. After examining these three sites, the Rev. W. F. Birch continues:

'The ancient Jebusite, by the contrivance of the "Gutter" (the scene of Joab's exploit), secured for his city an unfailing supply of water; so now he probably made En-rogel. It is probable that in prehistoric times water used after heavy rains to issue from the ground near Joab's Well, just as it does now by means of the well, and to flow in a voluminous stream down the valley towards the Dead Sea. When, in after-times, but before the Israelite invasion, the Jebusites found the supply from Gihon ("Virgin's Fount") insufficient for their wants, this father of civil engineers prospected for water in the valley, near the present site of Joab's Well. . . . So he cut in the rock, about seventy-five feet north of the well, the entrance to a staircase, discovered by Sir Charles Warren, which, after descending six feet to the west, divides into a northern and a southern branch; the northern staircase soon divides into two others. Not finding water, both were abandoned when the southern staircase gave indications that the excavators were reaching water. Soon a strong stream issued forth: "the brook was overflowing in the midst of the land." . . . It was really an artesian well. En-rogel probably means "the spring of searching out." It was found inconvenient to go down for water through the long dark staircase and passage; accordingly, from the surface of the valley a shaft was excavated to the roof

* January, 1889, 'Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement,' p. 40.

of the grotto, through which shaft the water-pots could be let down by a cord into the cistern below.

* * * * *

'Joab's Well itself may have been dug in the reign of Solomon, and deepened at a later date. It was certainly made after En-rogel. On Sennacherib's invasion "much people was gathered together, who stopped all the fountains and the brook that overflowed through" (or in) "the midst of the land." Now, at last, Hezekiah reaped the fruit of the Jebusite's forethought. Covering up the entrance to Gihon, he was able himself from within the city of Jerusalem to draw its waters by means of the "Gutter." Similarly it was easy to conceal all traces of En-rogel; but to stop "the brook that overflowed" proved in the end to be a work of extreme difficulty and extraordinary magnitude. At first, at a distance of forty-four feet from the grotto or cistern, he blocked up the rock-cut passage by "a masonry wall three feet thick, and composed of cut stones set in a hard black mortar, apparently mixed with oil. At the bottom a hole or duct was left, six inches and three-eighths by four inches, and on the northern side a stone plug to fit, and twelve inches long, was found in it."*

'Probably, at the same time, Hezekiah closed the shaft in the roof of the grotto with the "white stone" (see Warren). All this was easy enough, but when the heavy rains came on it would seem that the waters still issued from the surface, escaping either through some natural fissure in the rock below the soil, or because the shaft above the grotto or the staircase was not water-tight. The blocking up of the staircase (or, rather, its continuation to the grotto) by a *second* wall seems to imply that suspicion lighted on the last-named passage. However this might be, the attempt was of no use; the brook still continued as of old to overflow. Yet Hezekiah and his people

* Sir Charles Warren, 1870. See 'Letters,' pp. 141-153.

were not easily to be thwarted; if the brook would flow, it should certainly not *overflow*.

'At an immense expenditure of labour a spacious aqueduct (six feet high and from three feet six inches to four feet broad) was cut under the western side of the Kidron Valley, starting from the grotto, which was practically the source of the waters, and extending at least 1,800 feet down the ravine.'

(This is a work yet to be followed up by the Palestine Exploration Fund.)

'Now, at last, the brook was stopped. Buried as it was, forty or fifty feet out of sight, and beyond hearing, the Assyrians could never have found it.

'A further attempt seems to have been made to continue this tunnel (or aqueduct) on the same scale northwards. Apparently, the staircase was used for carrying out the chippings; but why the last eighty-six feet of it (*i.e.*, of the staircase, which here is really a passage with a slight fall) were not utilized in this extension is at present unintelligible. Operations were begun at a point eighty-six feet from the grotto, and after lowering the floor about nine feet, a new tunnel was continued north for 148 feet, generally about three feet nine inches wide and six feet high, and then the work was abandoned.

'Still, from the southern end of this 148 feet length a passage was cut to the grotto, apparently to enable the water trickling through into the 148 feet tunnel to flow into the grotto.

'The smaller dimensions (it is only about three and a half feet high), and the irregular course of this connecting-link, seem to indicate that it was made without much care. At the point of junction (eighty-six feet from the grotto) the old staircase has partly been cut away by this later work, so that the roof of the passage is fifteen feet high. From this point

the *link* runs directly under the older passage, and comes out into the grotto nine feet below the other, and six feet to the west of it.

'If Joab's Well had been already dug, it, too, must have been stopped by Hezekiah. If it was not already made, then the excavating of the great aqueduct must have deprived the people of Jerusalem of their greatest treat. After Sennacherib's departure they must have looked back with many regrets to the happy days when they used to disport themselves among the trees, by the banks of the overflowing brook. And never afterwards, until the exit from the grotto was blocked up (which the presence of some large stones in the tunnel, and at the bottom of the cistern or grotto, seems to indicate was done), or until Joab's Well was either made or re-opened, did the lower valley of the Kidron again present the bright and festive scene which must probably have been of almost yearly occurrence since Jerusalem was first inhabited, and certainly since the day that the clever Jebusite presented to his city the famous En-rogel.'*

'The following points are established :

'1. The 'Ain (spring) in the word "En-rogel" proves that at or near this spot there was a source and supply of LIVING *waters*.

'2. The *living waters* prove that the rock was (porous or) pierced by nature or art, so that the waters could pass through.

'3. The rock having been thus pierced, proves that there would be an overflowing brook at times, then as now.

'4. The great depth and size of the tunnel prove that it was intended to hide and convey away from the enemy a large volume of water.

* The Rev. W. F. Birch goes on to give *proof* of all these statements. The reader is referred to his article in the 'Quarterly Statement,' January, 1889.

'As Hezekiah is distinctly asserted to have stopped "the overflowing brook," and no one else apparently had both the necessity and ability for doing so, the conclusion is inevitable that Hezekiah made the long aqueduct owing to the invasion of Sennacherib. In other words, 2 Chron. xxxii. 4 must refer to this aqueduct.

'To sum up: (1) The *staircase*, called En-rogel, leading to the grotto, was made by the Jebusites at a date antecedent to Joshua's invasion; and (2) Hezekiah, on Sennacherib's invasion, *put in the plug*, and afterwards made the long aqueduct, thus stopping the brook that overflowed.'

Even now Dr. Thomson says: 'I have seen the water gushing out like a mill stream some fifteen rods south of the well, and then the whole valley was alive with people bathing in it and indulging in every species of hilarity.'*

Even now, to make the Kidron an artificial lake, all that would be necessary 'is a great dam across the ravine close to "the Spring of the Fig" (near the end of the aqueduct). An average annual rainfall of twenty-two inches will do the rest.'

This work does not attempt to deal with prophecy, but I think it is impossible not to recall as one reads this that 'vision of the waters' in Ezek. xlvii. 1. Here the prophet sees '*waters gushing out from under the threshold of the house eastwards*.' The vision continues, the waters are 'ankle-deep,' 'knee-deep;' and then, 'waters to swim in,' 'a river that I could not pass over.' Trees grow on its banks; the waters go to the salt sea. They heal that stagnant sea. Engedi shall be a place to 'spread nets upon,' because the 'waters issued out of the sanctuary.'

Is it too much to say that the prophet's vision relates to what has been shown to be even possible, taking things as they now are?

* 'The Land and the Book,' Thomson, p. 659.

In 1880 another discovery was made here. A boy playing with other lads fell as he was wading up the aqueduct. On rising to the surface he noticed what looked like letters on the rocky wall of the channel. Herr Schick was told. Squeezes were taken. *Savants* from all lands visited the place, and this was found to be the inscription :*

'Behold the excavation ! Now this is the further side (or the history) of the tunnel. While the excavators were lifting up the pick, each towards his neighbour, and while there were yet three cubits to the mouth (of the tunnel), the excavators were hewing. Each came to his neighbour at a measure's length . . . in the rock on high, and they worked eagerly at (the) castle they had excavated (?). The excavators worked eagerly each to meet the other, pick to pick. And the waters flowed

* I give below the *latest* translation Professor Sayce has given in the third edition of 'Fresh Light.' The last translation now given differs in some rather important particulars from the first.

1. '(Behold) the excavation ! Now this is the history of the excavation. While the excavators were still lifting up the pick, each towards his neighbour, and while there were yet three cubits to (excavate, there was heard) the voice of one man calling to his neighbour, for there was an excess in the rock on the right hand (and on the left). And after that on the day of excavating the excavators had struck pick against pick, one against the other, the waters flowed from the spring to the pool for a distance of 100 to 200 cubits. And (part) of a cubit was the height of the rock over the head of the excavators.'

'We learn from it that the engineering skill of the day was by no means despicable. The conduit was excavated in the same fashion as the Mont Cénis tunnel of our own time, by beginning the work simultaneously at the two ends ; and, in spite of its windings, the workmen almost succeeded in meeting in the middle. They approached, indeed, so nearly to one another that the noise made by the one party in hewing the rock was heard by the other, and the small piece of rock which intervened between them was accordingly pierced. This accounts for the two *culs-de-sac* now found in the centre of the channel ; they represent the extreme points reached by the two bands of excavators before they had discovered that, instead of meeting, they were passing by one another.'

from their outlet to the pool, for a distance of a thousand cubits, from the lower part (?) of the tunnel (which) they excavated at the head of the excavation here.'

'The inscription is the oldest Hebrew record of the kind yet discovered. It is an early contemporaneous specimen of the language of the Old Testament, written in that ancient form of the Phœnician alphabet already known to us from the Moabite Stone and a few legends on seals.

'The form of the alphabet, however, belongs to an even older period than that of the Moabite Stone. Therefore the age of this inscription is greater than that of the Moabite Stone.'*

We may note that 'the pool' is spoken of—the Bible says 'the brook that overflowed,' and the modern Pool of Siloam is simply called 'The Pool.' To pass to another and quite a recent discovery:

Isa. viii. 6 says: 'Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son.'

Here again I quote the Rev. W. F. Birch:†

'Five years ago, relying upon the topographical and historical accuracy of the Bible, I predicted with the utmost confidence that a careful search on the eastern side of Ophel would result in the discovery of an aqueduct, which in the time of Ahaz conveyed water from the Virgin's Fount (Gihon) to the mouth of the Tyropœon Valley. . . . On the plan I marked several spots for examination. The Committee put the matter in Herr Schick's hands.‡ He sank three shafts: one and two gave ambiguous results; "No. 3, at twenty feet the rock was found, and to our great joy the rock-hewn channel also (*i.e.*

* Professor Sayce, 'Fresh Light,' p. 88.

† 'Quarterly Statement,' January, 1889.

‡ 'Quarterly Statement,' 1886, p. 197 for Report.

the conjectural, not the known one); it is one foot ten inches wide, four feet three inches deep, both sides cut down perpendicularly . . . On the top of the sides were grooves, seven inches deep and eight and a half inches broad, to take the covering slab, which was no longer in its place."

'As the present use of the present rock-hewn tunnel is to convey water from the Virgin's Pool to the Tyropœon Valley, so the past use of the newly-found aqueduct was to do the same, BEFORE the rock-hewn tunnel was made or even thought of. The discovery of this aqueduct seems to be most valuable, because:

'1. It gives us a glimpse of the wonderful accuracy of the sacred records, since a brief notice in Isaiah has enabled us to recover an aqueduct disused for 2,600 years, whose very existence was denied by historical critics.

'2. The terms Shiloah, Siloah, and Siloam, can now, without any difficulty whatever, be applied to one spot at the south of Ophel.

'3. Once more Ophel, west of the Virgin's Fount, is found to be the site of the city of David, for the waters of Shiloah (*i.e.* aqueduct) must, as Thrupp* pointed out, have flowed from the city of David, and this (Schick's) aqueduct can only have led from the very same source as the Siloam tunnel does at the present day, viz., from the Virgin's Fount—*i.e.*, Gihon (2 Chron. xxxii. 30).

'4. There is no longer any room whatever for doubt as to the date of the Siloam tunnel; every difficulty has been removed. It was certainly Hezekiah's work.† The same may also be said of the inscription.

'5. In my opinion Schick's aqueduct is to be attributed to Solomon.

* 'Jerusalem,' p. 140.

† 'Quarterly Statement,' 1883, p. 106.

'6. *By this discovery an impetus ought to be given to excavation work at Jerusalem.*

'An unknown quantity, too, has been eliminated from the problem of discovering the sepulchres of David . . . but a search (on a line east and west) on the eastern side of Ophel must, in my opinion, reveal traces of the city wall; and a further search based on this would, I believe, be rewarded by most astonishing results—viz., the discovery of ancient tombs which must be royal. Perseverance, however, and money, too, will probably be needed to recover the sepulchre where David's dust "rests in hope" (if Matt. xxvii. 53 admit of it); the magnificent catacombs where Solomon "lies in his glory"; the lcculus (bed) of Asa, "filled with divers kind of spices"—in short, the *one* intact monument of the kings of Judah.'*

The remaining chapters of the second book of Chronicles but recapitulate the account of the closing days of the monarchy and the nationality of Judah. The reasons of the terrible fate which befell the Holy City, its Temple and people, are given by the inspired writer:

'And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling-place.

'But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy' (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16).

'It is a fearful thought that Israel was subjected to a Babylonian captivity of seventy years because it counted the covenant of God a dead document instead of a living power. It is a more appalling question: What must be in reserve for those nations which will not have the law of God written

* The reader is referred to the whole paper by the Rev. W. F. Birch; it is most able.

in their hearts; which choose to follow their own lower instincts; which say to the Holy Spirit, "Depart from us"? But as there was a light in that thick darkness, so there is in this. The covenant of God cannot fail; the purpose of God must be accomplished. There must come a day when God shall be known as the Father of all the families of the earth, and when they will not refuse to be His children.'*

* Maurice, 'The Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament,' pp. 443, 444.

APPENDIX.

ARAUNAH THE JEBUSITE.

In the 'Quarterly Statement' for Jan., 1891, Mrs. Finn writes:

'The quotation from 2 Sam. xxiv. 23 should read, "All these did Araunah *the* king" (not *a* king) "give unto the king." Araunah was "the king."'

So as Araunah was THE king of Jebus it was probably he who betrayed to Joab the secret of 'the Gutter,' and it also explains David's friendship for the Jebusite.

PITS IN THE SHITTIM PLAIN.

In the 'Palestine Fund Quarterly Statement' for Jan. 1891, Dr. Selah Merrill writes:

'As public attention has recently been called anew to these singular remains, I will quote my original description of them from the Fourth Statement of the Palestine Exploration Society, 1877, pp. 97-99 (see also "East of the Jordan," pp. 225-227).'

'"About one hour north of Wâdy Nimrin there is a series of pits running in a straight line across the plain from east to west. This series meets another running from north-east to south-west, the line of which is not exactly straight. The pit where these two lines intersect is larger than any of the others. At the extreme eastern end of the longest line, and just behind the end pit, there is a single pit which is very curious on account of its position. Each pit is 30 feet in diameter and perfectly round, while at present the depths of the pits varies from 3 to 6 feet. The distance from one pit to another is in general about equal to the diameter—although in exceptional cases it is increased to 50 or 60 feet. There are thirty-one pits in the longest line and twenty in the other. The line probably extended somewhat further towards the Jordan, but the pits in that direction have been obliterated in some way. . . . Further south, and near what is now the bank of Wâdy Nimrin, there are the remains of another series of pits, of which I counted about a dozen."'

Dr. Merrill doubts if these pits were in any way connected with a water-supply, and he points out that at Wâdy Nimrin, close by, there is a large living stream, and that canals to-day carry water south of the stream, and

that, if water were wanted north of the stream, it could be carried the same way. He concludes :

'At the time of my examination, my impression was that these pits were used for military purposes, and since then I have learned that similar pits are sometimes used in such a way.'

JACOB'S PILLAR.

In writing of the stone Jacob set up at Bethel, I said it was ridiculous to think that the so-called 'Coronation Stone' in Westminster Abbey was 'the veritable stone Jacob set up.' I pointed out that the stone in question is granite—'the kind of stone most common in Scotland.'

Various communications have been sent to the author in consequence of these remarks. The organ of the 'Anglo-Israelites,' *British Ephraim*, has some lengthy comments. It also asks :

'Can no stone of this kind be found in any old buildings, works, or deposits near Bethel?'

The answer to that is: The buildings and debris at Bethel are of the rock of the country—limestone. Further on, the article says :

'Be the *exact material* identity of the stone ever so doubtful—even assuming it is not literally the same—the argument drawn from the stone in favour of our origin from Ephraim, "The Firstborn" of Israel, is not only not weakened, but actually strengthened by the original stone, *in all its meaning, use and intention*, having been succeeded by another after the original perished.'

I said the theory of the stone being Jacob's Pillar was ridiculous—that it could not be the 'veritable stone.'

The official organ of the Anglo-Israelites says their argument is stronger even if the 'original stone' has been succeeded 'by another'! and it goes on to add: 'The theory styled "ridiculous" is certainly a great bulwark of Christian evidence.'

I prefer other and different sort of 'evidence.'

If proof were needed of the great importance of the work in which the Palestine Fund is engaged, it could be found in the single fact that the Fund has long ago secured an accurate impression of the celebrated Siloam inscription. Recently some evil-disposed person has cut that inscription away, and it is believed that some of the letters are lost. Now, but for the care taken by the agents of the Fund, this valuable inscription would have been lost to the world. Ere long we may look for discoveries on the sea-coast, as the Sultan has granted a firman for a railway from Haifa to Damascus. Fortunately, Herr Schumacher, who has been so active in noting discoveries of interest in Northern Palestine generally, is employed as one of the surveyors for the line, and we may therefore rest assured that anything discovered will be carefully noted. The valuable exploration work at Lachish is also to be resumed.

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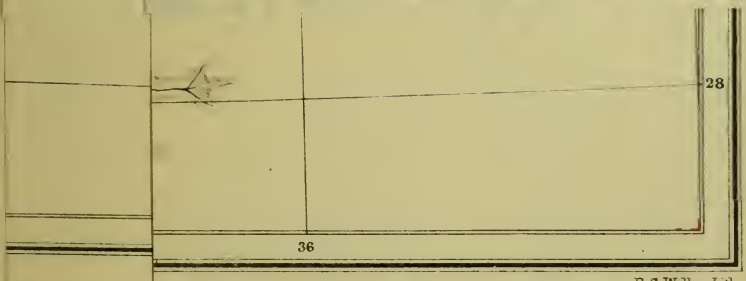

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COMPILED AND DRAWN FROM THE SURVEYS OF THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND
AND OTHER SOURCES
BY GEORGE ARMSTRONG
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Scale of Roman Miles
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THE DELTA
THE LAND OF GOSHEN
WILDERNESS OF ETHAM
WILDERNESS OF PARAN
Desert of the Wanderings
Badiet et Tih
GULF OF SUEZ
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Tell el Yahudiyeh
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Cairo
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Marah
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Beer Lahai Roi
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Books on Palestine.

The Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund have appointed Mr. Watt their Publisher and the Sole Agent for the sale of their books to the general public.

These books (of which a detailed account will be found below) are absolutely unrivalled by any works on the Holy Land, ancient or modern; even by those whose most valuable portions are those taken from the work of the Society. It must never be forgotten that no single traveller, however well equipped by previous study, can compete with a scientific body of explorers, working on well-defined lines, well instructed as to the places and

methods of examination, and provided with the instruments required for the conduct of their work. The following enumeration of the officers who have worked for the Society in the field will show the character and authority of these names, and the weight which such names lend to the work in hand.

Col. Sir Charles Wilson, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., LL.D., F.R.S., R.E.

Ordnance Surveyor of Jerusalem and the Peninsula of Sinai; afterwards of the Intelligence Department, Consul-General of Anatolia, and now Director of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain.

Col. Sir Charles Warren, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., F.R.S., R.E.

In command of the Excavations at Jerusalem, Governor of Griqualand West, Instructor in surveying at Chatham, late Head of the Metropolitan Police, Governor of the Straits Settlement.

Major Anderson, C.M.G., R.E.

Who accompanied Sir Charles (then Captain) Wilson to Jerusalem. Died 1879.

Major Conder, R.E.

Surveyor of Western Palestine and portion of Eastern Palestine. Author of the books detailed below : now on the Staff of the Ordnance Survey.

Lieut.-Col. Kitchener, C.B., C.M.G., R.E.

Who accompanied Major Conder, and completed alone the Survey of Western Palestine. Late Governor of Suakim.

Captain Mantell, R.E.

Who accompanied Major Conder in the Eastern Survey.

Edward Henry Palmer, M.A.

Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic, Cambridge ; Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. Explorer of the Desert of the Exodus, Translator of the Koran, and Author of many valuable Oriental Works. Murdered by Arabs, 1882.

C. F. Tyrwhitt Drake, F.R.G.S.

Who accompanied Palmer in his journey across the Desert, Burton in his wanderings about North Syria, and Conder in the Survey of Western Palestine. Died in Jerusalem, 1875. His literary remains were collected and published (Bentley & Son) in the following year.

Charles Clermont-Ganneau.

For many years attached to the French Consulate, Jerusalem ; now Professor of Sinaitic Archæology at the Sorbonne.

Edward Hull, LL.D., F.R.S., F.G.S.

Professor of Geology, Dublin. Chief of the Geological Expedition to the Valley of Akabah in 1883.

Conrad Schick.

Who has resided for a great many years at Jerusalem, and is as well acquainted with the city and with the question at issue as any person in the world.

Gottlieb Schumacher, C.E.

Of Haifa. A young German engineer who has recently done excellent work for the Society.

Rev. Greville Chester.

This traveller has made several minor expeditions for the Society. Among them are journeys to the Island of Ruad (the Phœnician Aradus), across the neck of country between the Suez Canal and Gaza to the seaboard bordering North Syria, etc.

The following are the Works published for the Society by Mr. Watt:

George Armstrong.

Assistant Secretary to Palestine Exploration Fund.

Names and Places in the Old and New Testament and Apocrypha.

This is a book which has been very often asked for, and has never yet been supplied. It is absolutely indispensable for everyone who pretends to a minute study of any portion of the Bible.

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For description see above.

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Major Conder, R.E.

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This volume, the least known of Major Conder's works, probably on account of its somewhat unattractive title, is none the less the most valuable to the Biblical student. It attempts a task never before approached—the reconstruction of Palestine from its monuments. It *shows, in fact, all that we should know of Syria if there were no Bible at all*, and it illustrates the Bible from the monuments which remain.

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This book is an attempt to read the Hittite inscriptions. It is not yet possible to say how far the Author has succeeded. It is certain, however, that he has, as yet, seen no reason to change his views since the publication of the work.

Henry A. Harper,

Author of "Illustrated Letters to my Children, "Walks in Palestine," etc., etc.

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W. M. Flinders Petrie.

Author of "Pyramids and Temples of Gizeh"; "Tanis," I. and II.; "Naukratis," I.; "A Season in Egypt"; "Hawara, Biahmu, and Arsinoe"; "Historical Scarabs"; "Kahun, Garob, and Hawara," etc.

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